



NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.
COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

VISITING TEAM REPORT

Parish Hill Middle/High School

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10/30/2016 - 11/02/2016

STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

THE DISTRIBUTION, USE, AND SCOPE OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Committee on Public Secondary Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges considers this visiting committee report to be a privileged document submitted by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges to the principal of the school and by the principal to the state department of education. Distribution of the report within the school community is the responsibility of the school principal. The final visiting committee report must be released in its entirety within sixty days (60) of its completion to the superintendent, school board, public library or town office, and the appropriate news media.

The prime concern of the visiting committee has been to assess the quality of the educational program at this school in terms of the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. Neither the total report nor any of its subsections is to be considered an evaluation of any individual staff member but rather a professional appraisal of the school as it appeared to the visiting committee.

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

The Committee on Public Secondary School's Standards for Accreditation serve as the foundation for the accreditation process and by which accreditation decisions are made. The seven Standards are qualitative, challenging, and reflect current research and best practice. The Standards, written and approved by the membership, establish the components of schools to ensure an effective and appropriate focus on teaching and learning and the support of teaching and learning.

Teaching and Learning Standards

Core Values and Beliefs About Learning

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of and for Student Learning

Support Standards

School Culture and Leadership

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning

CORE VALUES, BELIEFS, AND LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Teaching and Learning Standard

Effective schools identify core values and beliefs about learning that function as explicit foundational commitments to students and the community. Decision-making remains focused on and aligned with these critical commitments. Core values and beliefs manifest themselves in research-based, school-wide 21st century learning expectations. Every component of the school is driven by the core values and beliefs and supports all students' achievement of the school's learning expectations.

1. The school community engages in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning.
2. The school has challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social and civic competencies. Each expectation is defined by specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement.
3. The school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school, drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions and resource allocations.
4. The school regularly reviews and revises its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school community priorities.

CURRICULUM

Teaching and Learning Standard

The written and taught curriculum is designed to result in all students achieving the school's 21st century expectations for student learning. The written curriculum is the framework within which a school aligns and personalizes the school's 21st century learning expectations. The curriculum includes a purposefully designed set of course offerings, co-curricular programs, and other learning opportunities. The curriculum reflects the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The curriculum is collaboratively developed, implemented, reviewed, and revised based on analysis of student performance and current research.

1. The curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
2. The curriculum is written in a common format that includes:
 - units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills
 - the school's 21st century learning expectations
 - instructional strategies
 - assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success, school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics.
3. The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through:
 - inquiry and problem-solving
 - higher order thinking
 - cross-disciplinary learning
 - authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school
 - informed and ethical use of technology.
4. There is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum.
5. Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.
6. Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.
7. The district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research.

INSTRUCTION

Teaching and Learning Standard

The quality of instruction is the single most important factor in students' achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Instruction is responsive to student needs, deliberate in its design and delivery, and grounded in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Instruction is supported by research in best practices. Teachers are reflective and collaborative about their instructional strategies and collaborative with their colleagues to improve student learning.

1. Teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.
2. Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by:
 - personalizing instruction
 - engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning
 - engaging students as active and self-directed learners
 - emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking
 - applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks
 - engaging students in self-assessment and reflection
 - integrating technology.
3. Teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by:
 - using formative assessment, especially during instructional time
 - strategically differentiating
 - purposefully organizing group learning activities
 - providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom.
4. Teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by:
 - using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments
 - examining student work
 - using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents
 - examining current research
 - engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.
5. Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices.

ASSESSMENT OF AND FOR STUDENT LEARNING

Teaching and Learning Standard

Assessment informs students and stakeholders of progress and growth toward meeting the school's 21st century learning expectations. Assessment results are shared and discussed on a regular basis to improve student learning. Assessment results inform teachers about student achievement in order to adjust curriculum and instruction.

1. The professional staff continuously employs a formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics
2. The school's professional staff communicates:
 - individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families
 - the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community.
3. Professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.
4. Prior to each unit of study, teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed.
5. Prior to summative assessments, teachers provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success, such as corresponding rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement.
6. In each unit of study, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.
7. Teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments.
8. Teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.
9. Teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.
10. Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, including all of the following:
 - student work
 - common course and common grade-level assessments
 - individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations
 - standardized assessments
 - data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions
 - survey data from current students and alumni.
11. Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning.

SCHOOL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

Support Standard

The school culture is equitable and inclusive, and it embodies the school's foundational core values and beliefs about student learning. It is characterized by reflective, collaborative, and constructive dialogue about research-based practices that support high expectations for the learning of all students. The leadership of the school fosters a safe, positive culture by promoting learning, cultivating shared leadership, and engaging all members of the school community in efforts to improve teaching and learning.

1. The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.
2. The school is equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
3. There is a formal, on-going program(s) or process(es) through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.
4. In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff:
 - engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning
 - use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices
 - dedicate formal time to implement professional development
 - apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
5. School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning.
6. The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.
7. Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students.
8. The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.
9. Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.
10. Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning.
11. The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.
12. The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school.

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Support Standard

Student learning and well-being are dependent upon adequate and appropriate support. The school is responsible for providing an effective range of coordinated programs and services. These resources enhance and improve student learning and well-being and support the school's core values and beliefs. Student support services enable each student to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

1. The school has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
2. The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services.
3. Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.
4. School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - deliver a written, developmental program
 - meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling
 - engage in individual and group meetings with all students
 - deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers
 - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.
5. The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - provide preventative health services and direct intervention services
 - use an appropriate referral process
 - conduct ongoing student health assessments
 - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.
6. Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum
 - provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum
 - ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school
 - are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning
 - conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.
7. Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations
 - provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students
 - perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to

improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Support Standard

The achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations requires active community, governing board, and parent advocacy. Through dependable and adequate funding, the community provides the personnel, resources, and facilities to support the delivery of curriculum, instruction, programs, and services.

1. The community and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for:
 - a wide range of school programs and services
 - sufficient professional and support staff
 - ongoing professional development and curriculum revision
 - a full range of technology support
 - sufficient equipment
 - sufficient instructional materials and supplies.
2. The school develops, plans, and funds programs:
 - to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant
 - to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment
 - to keep the school clean on a daily basis.
3. The community funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses:
 - programs and services
 - enrollment changes and staffing needs
 - facility needs
 - technology
 - capital improvements.
4. Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget.
5. The school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services.
6. The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.
7. All professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school.
8. The school develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning.

School and Community Summary

School and Community Summary

Parish Hill Middle High School (PHMHS), located in the town of Chaplin in northeastern Connecticut, serves the towns of Chaplin, Scotland, and Hampton. These three rural towns are located approximately 45 minutes from the state capital.

Chaplin, Scotland, and Hampton have a combined population of 5,905 as of 2011, and the communities are economically, racially, culturally, and ethnically similar. English is the primary spoken language in all three towns. Twenty-eight percent of Chaplin residents have a bachelor's degree or higher; 38% of Hampton residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, and 22% of Scotland residents have a bachelor's degree or higher as of 2012. Chaplin has the largest population with 2,412 residents; Hampton has 1,799; and Scotland has 1,694. The median household income for Chaplin is \$75,333; Hampton is \$75,278; and Scotland is \$77,143. The poverty rate for Chaplin is 4.2%; Hampton is 6.5%; and Scotland is 1.1% as of 2012.

Employment opportunities are limited in the three towns. Chaplin has the most opportunity for industry with construction, retail trades, and food services. Scotland's major industry is farming. In Hampton, the local regional educational service center (RESC) is the major employer. Impactful employers located in these three towns include Savino Transportation, EastConn Administrative Offices, Bass Brothers Farm, and Twin Hill Trucking.

Chaplin, Scotland, and Hampton each operate independent elementary schools. Chaplin's elementary school totals 183 students; Hampton's elementary school enrolls 111 students; and Scotland's elementary school has a total of 133 students as of the 2012-2013 school year.

Regional District 11 has a per-pupil expenditure of \$19,865 per year as of the 2012-2013 school year. This is \$5,233 more than the average state expenditure per-pupil of \$14,642.

Parish Hill Middle High School serves grades 7-12, and has a total enrollment of 259 students, which includes 140 males and 119 females. Eighty-five and four tenths percent of students are white; 8.5% Hispanic or Latino; and 2.7% black or African American. About 20% of students are students with Individualized Education Plans; this does not include students with Section 504 Plans. During the 2015-2016 academic year, 77 students qualified for free or reduced lunches. There are a total of 27 content teachers, which allows for a 1:9.6 student-teacher ratio. PHMHS has a 100% graduation rate. The average teacher at PHMHS is absent 9.4 days per academic year due to illness or personal time, compared to the state average of 9.3. Nineteen percent of eighth grade students opt to enroll at a technical school after attending PHMHS for grades seven and eight as of 2016. There are currently seven students that pay tuition to attend PHMHS at a cost of \$7,500 each per year.

Parish Hill Middle High School provides many opportunities for students to enrich and broaden their educational experiences. In the 2013-2014 academic year, PHMHS entered into a tuition agreement with nearby Windham Public Schools, which has brought greater diversity to the district. A small number of students from Windham now attend Parish Hill, leading to increased diversity. Parish Hill subscribes to an online learning and credit recovery program, Fuel Ed. The school also subscribes to the Middlebury Interactive World Language program in order to broaden student access to language choices.

The school also has a strong advisory program, through which all students are encouraged to form a mentor-based relationship with one adult in the building. Weekly advisory lessons, which are tailored to each grade level, provide opportunities for discussions based upon topics such as respect, responsibility, goal setting, peer relationships, and post-graduate planning. Additionally, seventh grade students are further supported through the School Success Skills class, which serves as a transition support.

Parish Hill Middle High School has a range of partnerships with various community educational and vocational institutions. These opportunities include the Windham High Incentive Program (WHIP) program Eastern Connecticut State University, college partnerships with Quinebaug Valley Community College and Three Rivers, and early college experience (ECE) credits through the University of Connecticut.

Fifty-seven percent of 2016 PHMHS graduates planned to attend a four-year college, and 25% planned to attend a two-year college. The University of Connecticut and Quinebaug Valley Community College were the top two choices for post-secondary educational institutes. Of the remaining graduates, 7% planned to attend a technical school and 11% reported plans to work after graduation.

Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations

We believe students learn best and become contributing, productive members of society through:

- *Highly engaging, rigorous and relevant instruction
- *Varied educational experiences
- *An environment that allows them to grow academically, socially, and personally
- *Participation within a safe school climate

21st Century Learning Expectations

ACADEMIC

Students will:

- *Demonstrate effective communication
- *Use information, media and technology effectively and responsibly
- *Demonstrate the ability to effectively apply problem solving skills across the curriculum
- *Become independent and self-directed learners
- *Attain the skills and habits for college and career readiness

CIVIC/SOCIAL

Students will:

- *Apply decision making/problem solving skills in social/civic areas
- *Handle social situations with respect and responsibility toward others
- *Demonstrate responsibility for their own behavior and actions
- *Contribute to the welfare of others

Characteristics of a Parish Hill Pirate

Problem Solver

Independent

Respectful and responsible

Academic achiever

Technologically proficient

Effective Communicator

Introduction

Introduction

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) is the oldest of the six regional accrediting agencies in the United States. Since its inception in 1885, the Association has awarded membership and accreditation to those educational institutions in the six-state New England region who seek voluntary affiliation.

The governing body of the Association is its Board of Trustees which supervises the work of four Commissions: the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE), the Commission on Independent Schools (CIS), the Commission on Public Schools which is comprised of the Committee on Public Secondary Schools (CPSS), the Committee on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI), and the Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools (CPEMS), and the Commission on International Education (CIE).

As the responsible agency for matters of the evaluation and accreditation of public secondary school member institutions, CPSS requires visiting teams to assess the degree to which the evaluated schools meet the qualitative Standards for Accreditation of the Committee. Those Standards are:

Teaching and Learning Standards

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of and for Student Learning

Support of Teaching and Learning Standards

School Culture and Leadership

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning

The accreditation program for public schools involves a threefold process: the self-study conducted by the local professional staff, the on-site evaluation conducted by the Committee's visiting team, and the follow-up program carried out by the school to implement the findings of its own self-study and the valid recommendations of the visiting team and those identified by the Committee in the Follow-Up process. Continued accreditation requires that the school be reevaluated at least once every ten years and that it show continued progress addressing identified needs.

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Study

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Parish Hill Middle/High School a committee of 12 members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people.

The self-study of Parish Hill Middle/High School extended over a period of 18 school months from October 2014 to October 2016. Student representatives, parents, central office staff, and school board members joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

Public schools evaluated by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their alignment with the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, and unique student population. In addition to using the Self-Study Guides developed by a representative group of New England educators and approved by the Committee, Parish Hill Middle/High School also used questionnaires developed by The Research Center at Endicott College to reflect the concepts contained in the Standards for Accreditation. These materials provided discussion items for a comprehensive assessment of the school by the professional staff during the self-study.

It is important that the reader understand that every subcommittee appointed by the steering committee was required to present its report to the entire professional staff for approval. No single report developed in the self-study became part of the official self-study documents until it had been approved by the entire professional staff.

The Process Used by the Visiting Team

A visiting team of 12 members was assigned by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate the Parrish Hill Middle/High School. The visiting team members spent four days in Chaplin, Connecticut at Parish Hill Middle/High School, reviewed the self-study documents, which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students and parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school aligns with the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. Because the members of the visiting team represented classroom teachers, guidance counselors, library/media specialists, building administrators, and central office administrators, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Parish Hill Middle/High School.

The visiting team built its professional judgment on evidence collected from the following sources:

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 36 hours shadowing 12 students for a half day
- a total of 22 hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)
- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facility
- individual meetings with 24 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers

Standard 1 Indicator 1

Conclusions

Parish Hill Middle/High School (PSMHS) engaged in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning. PHMHS models the core values and beliefs as purposeful foundational practices that inspire and support the school and community as a whole. *Understanding by Design (UbD)*, was used as a model for the systemic development of core values and beliefs about learning. The practices recommended through *UbD* coupled with a common understanding of personalized brain-based educational are the foundational models that support the core values and beliefs developments at PHMHS. In addition to the *UbD* engagement, several significant partnerships have been formed with regional colleges and institutions. These partnerships have provided the opportunity for PHMHS to take advantage of programming grounded in evidenced-based practices allowing students and staff to access information that would otherwise not be available. Programs such the Early College Experience (ECE) and the Middlebury Language Interactive program have become successful avenues for student engagement. The school community recognizes the importance in maintaining the core values and beliefs about learning and is committed to providing optimum learning opportunities and transferable skills for student success within and beyond PHMHS. The school began the 18-month process of creating and implementing the core values and beliefs in preparation for implementation during the 2012-2013 school year. The staff devoted several professional development days and faculty meetings in order to closely examine the mission statement. In addition to collecting stakeholder feedback to guide the development process, exemplar models were reviewed to inform the process. Thus, the experience was inspired by best practices. The staff analyzed the mission statement in order to decide which principles from the statement that were desirable for adoption into the new core values and beliefs. The staff took part in a variety of activities such as a gallery walk in the library using posters and bulletin boards to express emerging themes. As a result of a variety of opportunities for input, faculty members came to a consensus on priority values and beliefs relative to PHMHS. A survey was provided to all parents during the 2012-2013 school year at parent-teacher conferences requesting input toward the core values and beliefs. In scheduled advisory groups, students were also provided surveys, which sought their perspective. Based upon the variety of feedback, staff came to an agreement as to what should be adopted as the core values and beliefs of PHMHS. The stakeholders' finalized core values and beliefs were reviewed by the PHMHS Board of Education, and were officially adopted by the school and community in June 2013. Although most students demonstrate great acknowledge and personal connection to the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, the varied responses from students indicate that there is difficulty with comprehension from middle school students in grasping the scope of the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. One staff member explained a lesson plan opportunity he created that focused on breaking down the core values and learning expectations into relevant chunks in an effort to engage students. This opportunity evolved into the development of a variety of posters that offered a youthful perspective on the current core values, beliefs, and learning expectations model. Because the school engaged in thoughtful, collaborative, stakeholder inclusive, and meaningful development of its core values and beliefs about learning informed by current research-based best practices, parents, students, and community members have a common understanding of and have committed to Parish Hill's Core Values, Beliefs, and 21st Century Learning Expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study

- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- student work
- teacher interview
- parents
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 1 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school has challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies, and are defined by school-wide analytic rubrics or specific, measurable criteria but all departments do not consistently identify how students achieve or exceed targeted high levels of achievement. The school designed a matrix for each department that outlines which classes are responsible for implementing each rubric. Benchmark assessments are entered into PowerSchool once per semester, and data results are entered per each indicator of the rubric so that student feedback is specific. In addition to designing data collection matrices, the data is analyzed in an effort to provide feedback on student learning outcomes used to gauge end-of-semester and end-of-course content mastery. All teachers are required to enter one benchmark assessment every semester. The school counseling department also collects data about the civic and social expectations for each student through the advisory program. Weekly advisory lessons are often centered on the core values and beliefs, and students are periodically assessed on their knowledge of the core values and beliefs through these lessons. In the school year 2013-2014, the rubrics were modified to the new core values and beliefs. In the school year 2014-2015, benchmark data was entered into PowerSchool that was based upon the rubrics and the standards. PHMHS is in the process of working with the PowerSchool provider in order to finalize a format in which to report out the data to the community. In the school year 2016-2017, the goal is to report out on the benchmarks. Teachers in some areas utilize challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies and are measured by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify limited advanced levels of achievement. In 2013, the rubric development committees were formed and charged with creating rubrics designed to affect each part of the core values and beliefs: writing, speaking, independent learner, problem-solving, technology, college-career readiness, and civic-social. This process was collaborative and offered teachers the opportunity to provide input and feedback throughout the yearlong process. Committees were inclusive of all faculty and meetings took place in order to discuss and approve each rubric. In an attempt to engage students in the use of rubrics, advisory periods were used to familiarize students with each rubric. Students were given a consistent overview that included understanding individual indicators for each rubric. The strong staff and student understanding of these rubrics are reflected in the Endicott survey. One hundred percent of staff agrees that the school has adopted school-wide analytic rubrics that define all of the 21st century academic, social, and civic learning expectations, and 81.2 percent of the students are familiar with the school-wide rubrics. Additionally, 77.9 percent of parents agree that they understand the level of learning that is expected of their sons/daughters. Each department at PHMHS is assigned one or more of the rubrics that they are expected to specifically focus upon with their curriculum. These rubrics are expected to be used at least twice per year with benchmark assessments in these classes so that all students are being equally assessed. For example, the math department is responsible for collecting and analyzing data from the problem-solving rubric and the independent learner rubric. The English department is expected to use the writing and speaking rubrics. In many classrooms, students use rubrics to self-assess and monitor their own learning and support the goal of providing consistent school-wide rubrics. PHMHS has created challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectation for all students, which address academic, social, and civic competencies that are measured by school-wide analytic rubrics; therefore, identifying targeted high levels of achievement will increase the rigor expected of students.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work

- teacher interview
- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 1 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are consciously reflected in the culture of the school, often drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in some classrooms, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations. The core values and beliefs are pervasive in the school. Students and staff clearly care for one another, feel appreciated by each other, and have much pride in PHMHS. Students are encouraged to join and even create organizations, such as the Gay Straight Alliance, equestrian club, math club, coding club, and a variety of student-motivated opportunities to meet the needs of their peers who may not traditionally seek to join a club. School awards and recognition procedures are reflective of these values and beliefs. Opportunities focusing on community service such as the Empty Bowl program and Middle School Kindness have made a significant impact on a positive culture in the building. Student Council, National Honor Society, Pirate Pride Referrals, and others demonstrate the learning expectations of personal responsibility. Posters of the core values and beliefs are clearly posted in each classroom, as well as in other areas of the school. Teachers' personal values have been codified in the core values. The school has five College Connection courses and also participates in the Early College Experience (ECE) through the University of Connecticut. PHMHS has secured academic relationships with additional local educational institutions in order to challenge students: Windham High Incentive Program (WHIP) with Eastern Connecticut State University, College Partnership with Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC). Students are also able to participate in music regional auditions, Model United Nations, National Honor Societies, and the peer mentoring program, all of which promote independence and foster academia. The school's pirate mascot is used as an acronym and stimulus to convey the school's core values and beliefs: "P" is for problem solver; "I" is for independent; "R" is for respect and responsible; "A" is for academic achiever; "T" is for technologically proficient; and "E" is for effective communicator. The acronym was created in an effort for students be able to articulate the core values and beliefs in an accessible format. Although posters and pirate acronyms are visible through the school and on the website, the middle school students find the core values and beliefs posters cumbersome and difficult to make personal thus far in their educational experience at PHMHS. The core values and beliefs also drive curriculum in a variety of ways. Many PHMHS course offerings reflect the principles of the core values and beliefs. Furthermore, the course catalogue lists the core values and beliefs, and the 21st century learning expectations. PHMHS core values and beliefs are intended to instill an expectation of high achievement for each student; expectations that are inclusive of both academics and independence. As a result of greater focus on core values and beliefs an increase in Advanced Placement courses has been elevated to eight. The senior Capstone project is a culminating project that requires students to demonstrate many of the core values and beliefs, including effective communication through both speaking and writing. Seniors have the option to take human communications courses to supplement this core value. Additionally, a practice Capstone project was added to the seventh grade curriculum to meet this need. The Middlebury Language Interactive program and Fuel Ed program reflect the core values' emphasis on using technology while also fostering the tenet of independence. PHMHS supports efforts to instill values of independence and problem solving within each of the students; thus daily instruction and planning is informed by these beliefs. PHMHS adapted the best-practice lesson plan format in order to incorporate the core values and beliefs to drive instruction. The core values and beliefs and the 21st century learning expectations are written in all formal lesson plans, and are routinely visible in daily instruction. Wiggins and McTighe's *Understanding by Design (UbD)* lesson plan format is used, and in 2013 characteristics of *UbD* were added to the formal lesson plan, which requires teachers to identify which core values and beliefs and 21st century learning expectations the teachers will use in their lessons. Teachers also post the core values and beliefs that apply to either daily lessons or unit plans in their classrooms. In addition to the consistency of the lesson planning, there is a greater emphasis to gauge understanding through the use of a variety of formal and informal assessments. In addition to the decisions aligned to the core values and beliefs that drive curriculum, instruction, and the culture and climate of the school, PHMHS sought to improve their technology capabilities in order to align to their core values and beliefs, so several decisions and resource allocations were made. A second computer lab was added. There was an initiative to have a SMART Board in every classroom, which is

nearly complete. Teachers also use iPads and clicker technology as classroom response systems during instruction. The school has also purchased four Chromebook carts, which are housed in specific departments. In the fall of 2015, PHMHS made a school-wide shift toward faculty and student use of Google Apps for Education. Students and faculty are equipped with their own Google account. Perkins Grant funding was used to revamp the family and consumer science wing into a restaurant-grade system. The school has a morning broadcast video production that is largely run by students, and Naviance, a software program used by all students through guidance. The school now has a full commitment to the “Bring Your Own Device” (BYOD) policy, which was a collaborative effort between staff and students. Because the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school, drive curriculum, instruction, and some assessment practices, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations, they permeate the learning community and provide students with multiple opportunities to achieve the learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 1 Indicator 4

Conclusions

The school is in the process of developing a plan to review and revise its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, which will be based on research and multiple data sources, as well as on district and community priorities. The current core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations were adopted by 2013. In the school year 2016-2017, Parish Hill Middle/High School will be reviewing data and reviewing core values and beliefs. The school community anticipates reviewing and revising this document in five years. When the school develops a process to regularly review and revise its core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations based on research and multiple data sources, as well as on district and community priorities, the school can ensure the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are relevant and will drive decision making at the school.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- school board
- department leaders
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 1 Commendations

Commendation

The identification of the need to revise the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations for relevancy

Commendation

The pervasive extent to which the core values and beliefs are embedded and reflected in the school's culture and instruction

Commendation

The involvement of all stakeholders in the development and approval of the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations over a four-year period

Commendation

The consistent reinforcement of the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations across the school

Commendation

The development of an acronym using the school mascot to infuse the core values into the culture of the school

Standard 1 Recommendations

Recommendation

Review and revise the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations regularly to ensure relevancy for all students

Recommendation

Address the current school-wide rubrics to ensure targeted high levels of achievement at the middle school and high school levels

Standard 2 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The Parish Hill Middle/High School curriculum is purposefully designed in several areas to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Many staff have aligned their curriculum to the learning expectations by designing units using the *Understanding by Design (UbD)* template, but completion of the process has been delayed by K-6 articulation with sending schools, curriculum coordination, and inconsistencies in staff training. According to the Endicott survey, 61.4 percent of the school's staff is in agreement that the formal curriculum design ensures that all students practice and achieve all of the learning expectations, while 85.1 percent of parents believe the same. Some staff employ an informal method of curriculum writing that includes the identification of core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Nevertheless, effective single units using *UbD* have been created and used throughout the school. An Advanced Placement (AP) English Language and Composition unit analyzed an author's purpose by examining rhetorical appeals and textual evidence. An Introduction to Computer-Aided Design (CAD) unit included competency-based applied learning that increased student problem-solving skills. A math unit analyzed functions, rules, and inputs/outputs. In addition, almost the entire science curriculum was designed using *UbD* criteria. In addition, the *UbD* units are directly aligned to Connecticut's Common Core State Standards. Completed student work focused on the 21st century learning expectations is posted in hallways, particularly in the science wing of the school. Much student work adorns walls and bulletin boards of individual classrooms. Individual teachers understand which learning expectations they are responsible for teaching. The curriculum for a Capstone program has been in place for several years that combines interdepartmental involvement with students that results in a senior project product that addresses the 21st century learning expectations. However, new teachers lack training in the common format lesson planning format and inconsistencies exist. As curriculum in all areas is purposefully designed and implemented in all classes, all students can consistently practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The curriculum at Parish Hill Middle/High School is frequently written in a common format and includes essential questions, concepts, content, skills, the school's 21st century learning expectations, instructional strategies, and assessment practices that include the use of course and school-wide analytic rubrics. Many departments have employed the *Understanding by Design (UbD)* template to write their curricula, but the practice has not been consistent among all departments. Some existing curricula have not yet been transferred over to the *UbD* template. Some curricula are still in development, in general. Presently, all departments are working toward a 100 percent completion rate to use the common *UbD* format. According to the Endicott survey, 81.6 percent of staff agrees that a common, formal curriculum template is used in all subjects. Unit plans include various forms of technology and student-centered learning. In social studies, Civics and United States History curricula were written in the *UbD* format. The scope and sequence of skills are not always clearly articulated vertically or horizontally within and among departments. For example, updating curriculum templates in music and social studies were done with partial fidelity to the template. The music curriculum infused the core values, 21st century skills, and state standards into the newly revised curricula in the fall of 2016, but the curriculum template was not used. All science curricula use this format, although not all grade-level curricula have been uploaded to the curriculum repository on the internal drive. In math, AP Calculus and Algebra II courses/units have been completed using the format. Unless after-school hours were used, there is not enough formal time for curricular planning. Monthly department meetings are sometimes used to discuss curriculum coordination. The school has instituted "curriculum writing Saturdays" in order to provide extra paid time for teachers to write curriculum and was extended beyond the prescribed certain Saturdays in the year. There are also some after-school hours for curriculum writing. Assessment practices include the use of school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics. Teachers explain and apply rubric use to increase learning objectives and academic skills. According to the Endicott survey, 57.9 percent of staff agrees the formal curriculum design ensures all students practice and achieve all the school's learning expectations. Likewise, curriculum is structured to include learning expectations, core values, and beliefs. The advisory and Capstone curricula integrate civic/social expectations through weekly lessons that are designed per grade level. The Endicott survey reveals 72.7 percent of parents were informed of their children's school-wide learning expectations. Although much of the curriculum is written in a common format and includes essential questions, concepts, content, skills, the school's 21st century learning expectations, instructional strategies, and assessment practices that include the use of course and school-wide analytic rubrics, ensuring all curricula are written in a common format will further support teaching and learning.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 2 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem solving; higher order thinking; cross-disciplinary learning; authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school, and informed and ethical use of technology to some extent. The scope and sequence of skills are not always clearly articulated vertically within the written curriculum, in part, because teachers author their own curriculum with limited ability to formally consult with their colleagues about horizontal or vertical articulation. Although there is an identified need for curriculum coordination, the faculty has significant depth of understanding and practical application knowledge in their respective subject areas. This is supported by the feedback from Endicott survey, which indicates 94 percent of teachers agree that the curriculum in their department or content area emphasizes both a depth of knowledge and application of knowledge. The integration of inquiry-based learning and higher order thinking skills, along with an emphasis on high depth of knowledge is not consistent among or within all departments. The Endicott survey reveals that 71.3 percent of students believe that their courses challenge them to think critically and to solve problems. Students also report that their courses demand depth of understanding and application of knowledge 89.5 percent of the time. However, the curriculum and classroom practices do not yet support a consistent, high level of rigor in all courses in all disciplines. The Capstone project infuses authentic inquiry-based learning that calls upon students to utilize higher order thinking skills both in and outside of school. It also involves cross-disciplinary learning and a connection to the community. The Capstone project emphasizes higher order thinking skills in a cross-disciplinary method. The curriculum for the advisory program is also scaffolded with skills in the 11th and 12th grades that helps lead students toward proficiency in the Capstone standards and college and career readiness skills, such as resume and cover letter writing and mock interviews. Students report that some of the curriculum in the seventh grade School Success Skills course also helps prepare them for time management and research and presentation skills that serve to prepare them for the Capstone project. Because the curriculum provides an emphasis on cross-disciplinary learning experiences and informed and ethical use of technology, the teaching staff indicated students partially show a depth of understanding and application of knowledge in some disciplines. Many students are exposed to a minimum of one cross-disciplinary unit of instruction each year. The Endicott survey reveals that 73.7 percent of teachers and 75.1 percent of students believe that the curriculum emphasizes cross-disciplinary learning opportunities. There is a project revolving around World War I, spearheaded by the social studies, English, and science departments in which the medical, literary, and historical impact of the war is explored through the poetry of a soldier. Another example of an interdisciplinary unit includes a science, technology, engineering, math (STEM) science project about building bridges, in which the technology department students help design and produce bridges using their three dimensional (3D) printer. There are some authentic learning experiences for students with the inclusion of guest speakers. The accounting classes provided a guest certified public accountant (CPA) to talk with students and bring in real-world experience. In a newly created math course, Financial Algebra, students encounter real-world, authentic material by tracking the stock market and by allowing those who have jobs to learn to do their own taxes. Lab projects in science, music concerts, world languages travel experiences, student-created video productions, and a restaurant run by culinary students are other examples of authentic experiences and student outcomes grounded in real-life experiences such as directing the production of a public service announcement, designing meals focused on nutrition or experiencing the opportunity to engage with speakers of foreign languages in other countries. With the infusion of technology in recent years, the curriculum is integrated with technology. Students are regularly trained and assessed on their use of technology in discipline-specific coursework and projects, as well as in the Capstone project, often using the school-wide rubrics. Additionally, there is a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy in the school, which holds students accountable for the ethical use of technology. The Endicott survey shows that 85.2 percent of students believe that their courses include the ethical use of technology. When all curricula emphasize depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry, problem-solving, higher order thinking, cross-disciplinary learning, with authentic learning opportunities in and outside the

classroom that are implemented with fidelity, the school can more fully meet its commitment to provide an equitable and rigorous classroom environment to give students explicit connections to college and career readiness skills.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum is evolving. There is evidence to suggest that in most classrooms what is outlined in the formal curriculum documents is being taught with fidelity by all teachers, and supported by the Endicott survey indicating that 78.9 percent of the staff believes that the written and taught curriculum are aligned. A great deal of work has been completed in the development of curriculum in most areas; however, the availability and accessibility of the curriculum online repository is inconsistent. A great effort has been undertaken in the past few years to acquire training regarding curriculum writing and development. The school is developing *Understanding by Design (UbD)* curriculum units for all subject areas. Teachers' lesson objectives and daily agendas define clear learning expectations and align with the *UbD* unit and lesson plans. Additionally, these learning expectations are posted daily in each classroom. Teachers meet with their respective evaluator during a pre-conference meeting and identify the expectations and objectives prior to formal classroom observations. The evaluator or any student should be able to identify skills and concepts related to each lesson's objectives and specifically answer each unit's essential questions. Administrators look for evidence of teachers incorporating effective teaching strategies, posting learning targets and essential questions, and implementing assignments that are aligned with 21st century learning skills or other core values and beliefs. Common formative assessments (CFAs), such as pre- and post-tests or common exams, assess student progress and determine mastery of course content and skills. Additionally, all midyear and final exams assess student mastery of the curriculum and of the learning expectations for the course. Data is gathered and analyzed from common assessments and standardized testing results to evaluate and improve the curriculum and its delivery. By reviewing these results, it can be determined how well the written and taught curriculum are aligned. Further development of designed units and implementation of the units with fidelity will ensure clear and consistent delivery of the written and taught curriculum.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 2 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Sporadic curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district. The greatest challenge with articulation of a K-12 vertical model is that there are four sending districts with independent school boards that support these entities. Regardless of these challenges, curriculum articulation at PHMHS is a long-term goal of the district. At this time, there is limited formal, curricular planning time and data to identify needs and improvements. Monthly faculty and department meetings are sometimes used to discuss curriculum coordination. Nevertheless, the program of studies and subsequent professional development in the form of staff meetings, department meetings, and curriculum writing workshops assist in articulating the school's curriculum coordination through a structure that includes core values and beliefs, graduation criteria, school-wide rubrics, guidelines for post-secondary education, and course designations. In addition to regular meetings, the school has used opportunities to open the building on weekends to foster curriculum writing opportunities for faculty who have been designated to function in this capacity. This opportunity has assisted greatly in the development of curricula. Individual courses are listed and clearly described by department. Pre-requisite information is listed with each course. Communication regarding course availability and parental rights is listed at the end of the program of studies book. In addition, the English department has a summer reading program that requires all students to read and complete challenging assignments. All written work is due on the first day of school. The middle school math program also requires students to complete summer content work and assessment-related curricula. In grade 7, a summer math pre-test is given to incoming students to assess math knowledge. Students email the test directly to the teacher. Incoming grade 8 students prepare for the fall by completing a packet of math assignments during the summer. Students can email their teacher for extra help. All students are expected to bring the completed assignment to their first math class. High school students are encouraged to prepare for the SAT in mathematics by completing summer work through Khan Academy and the College Board website. The purpose for this summer work is to increase student scores by practicing the basics. In addition to work on the written curriculum, professional development time has been scheduled to assist in coordinating the articulation across grade levels and subject areas. At the high school level, teachers have been asked to include at least one cross-disciplinary unit for each course during the year to further coordinate curriculum. For example, the art, music, social studies, and English departments created an interdisciplinary unit titled "Exploring the Cultures of Native American (Northeast)." Staggered projects, along with presentations of student work, will be presented in January and will be assessed with the use of the technology and other rubrics. Vertical articulation between middle school teachers and administrative staff from the sending elementary schools is limited. Parish Hill serves three elementary schools from the three surrounding towns in the region. Seventh grade teachers meet with the vertical coordination team from sending schools twice a year to discuss articulation of curriculum expectations and placement of individual students. Meetings are designed for the purpose of developing clear vertical articulation. Although there is a clear effort from Parrish Hill faculty to ensure curriculum articulation, the sending elementary schools have little opportunity to work toward PK-12 articulation. When there is a formal structure between and among all academic areas within the school and with sending schools to establish continuity, then more effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation will exist.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- parents

- department leaders
- Endicott survey

Standard 2 Indicator 6

Conclusions

Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities and the resources of the library/media center are partially sufficient to implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities. The Endicott survey shows that 50 percent of the staff feels that the staffing levels are adequate to implement the curriculum and the other co-curricular programs. The staff consists of 27 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers and the teacher-to-student ratio is 9.6 to 1. Many staff members are asked to wear multiple hats to accomplish the many needed roles within the school, both in and outside the classroom. Currently key teachers who receive a stipend for their services function as quasi-department heads have a full teaching load and complete their administrative duties outside of their teaching hours as there is no release time or other mechanism for them to attend to the larger issues about vision and school-wide articulation, specifically as it pertains to curriculum collaboration and articulation. Access to technology is adequate according to the 75 percent of parents responding to the Endicott survey. Similarly, 84.7 percent of students and 76.4 percent of parents report that they have the materials, equipment and technology that their children need in their coursework. Almost all classrooms are equipped with an interactive whiteboard. Specific technologies and programming options are made available for most departments. The online Middlebury Language program costs \$10,000 per year for 300 licenses, with an additional \$175 spent per pupil enrolled in a course needing an external instructor. Currently, three students are enrolled in a German course and one student is enrolled in Chinese. In the fine arts department, three licenses at \$90 each have been purchased for the SMART music program, which allows for ongoing formative assessment through an innovative alternative approach to music education. One fine arts teacher paid for a license out of pocket. Teachers have adequate access to supplies and resources much of the time. For example, fine arts teachers have an ample budget for supplies, which allows for full implementation of the curriculum. The math department recently received ten new graphing calculators and also a set of Chromebooks dedicated to their department, which is pivotal to helping teachers implement curriculum effectively. New equipment in technology education and culinary were received through grants, which is a common method for attaining needed supplies and materials. World languages cited a need for new headsets, as some were broken and/or missing, which was inhibiting the students' ability to listen and/or record via the online Middlebury Language program. The majority of parents, 75.8 percent, believe that the library/media center (LMC) adequately supports learning in their son's/daughter's classes. Since the offering of the Endicott survey, the LMC position has been reduced to a .5 full-time equivalent position creating the awareness that the LMC is not supervised and inaccessible to students and staff before and after school and at various times during the school day. There is access to a variety of digital, print, and non-print resources to implement the curriculum. However, the use of the LMC is sporadic and initiated most often by teachers soliciting help with a unit of instruction/project for their students. The Endicott survey reports that 76.4 percent of the students say their teachers require them to do research in the LMC. However, the reduced hours of the LMC each week negatively impact students' ability to complete work and teachers' ability to fully implement the curriculum. The Endicott survey reports that 67.5 percent of parents believe the facilities are adequate for implementing the curriculum and co-curricular opportunities. The science laboratories are adequate to conduct experiments in a safe and productive environment. The band and chorus rooms have adequate space, and the culinary kitchen space is modernized, with industrial grade stainless steel equipment attained through a grant proposal. Sufficient staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, and the resources of the library/media center having adequate access to materials and technology, will ensure full implementation of the curriculum.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations

- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 2 Indicator 7

Conclusions

The district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research in a limited way. The staff and administrators have used problem-solving skills to fill in gaps to help provide adequate personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research. According to the Endicott survey, 81.6 percent of staff report being directly involved in curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work; however, only 36.8 percent of staff feel they have sufficient time for the process. Collectively, staff expressed the need for more time to do curriculum work. Collaborative development of curricula sometimes occurs in courses with multiple teachers. Through Title I grant funding, the district opens the building once a month on Saturdays for teachers to be paid to write curriculum. Only four to eight teachers make use of this opportunity each time, as it is not mandatory for staff to attend. For the last three years, one or two professional days have been used for individual curriculum writing and interdisciplinary curriculum writing. The district has a formal five-year curriculum review cycle that was developed in 2016, and measures are in place to ensure fidelity of implementation. A large percentage of the staff is working independently or informally collaborating to write curricula, but there is not currently a formally planned process or time allotted for oversight of articulation of the curricula. Expenditures for curriculum development, evaluation and revision, including release time, stipends, leadership positions, etc., over the last three years fluctuate between \$4,500 and \$4,800 per year. Due to a zero percent increase budget in 2015-2016, the professional development budget for curriculum writing was reduced to \$1,500, but the administration was able to restore the line item to the original \$4,500 by supplementing it with grant money. The school uses archived data collected from assessment of the school's learning expectations to make revisions to the curriculum. A review of statewide testing data over several years indicated that the students were not making the gains needed in writing; the school used this data-mining effort to assist in driving programmatic changes. In 2015-2016, the results of standardized tests revealed significant gains in that core skill, and the practical writing course was removed and a survey literature course was added in the senior year. Other new courses added to the program of studies were added such as courses on Forensics and Environmental Science. Examples of other innovative thinking and practices as they pertain to delivery of the curriculum include a writing assignment for ninth graders on environmental energy, the inclusion of Escape Rooms lessons based on the book, *The Giver*, the creation of solar cookers, and Newton racers in science. As the district provides sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research, the curriculum can more fully meet the academic needs of students.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 2 Commendations

Commendation

The curriculum for the advisory program that consistently addresses the civic and social expectations for all students

Commendation

The purposeful selection of a common template for all curricula using the *Understanding by Design (UbD)* model

Commendation

The ongoing commitment and involvement of staff to write curriculum units employing the *Understanding by Design (UbD)* template

Commendation

The middle/high school program of studies that clearly articulates the curricular and course coordination and vertical structures

Commendation

The access to a multitude of technologies, programs, materials, resources, equipment and facilities that support implementation of the curriculum

Commendation

The inclusion of a cross-disciplinary Capstone project in the curriculum, which challenges students with rigorous, integrated goals and expectations

Standard 2 Recommendations

Recommendation

Ensure all curricula is purposefully designed so that students practice and achieve each of the school's learning expectations

Recommendation

Complete writing the curriculum for all subject areas in the common *Understanding by Design (UbD)* format

Recommendation

Ensure all curricula further emphasize depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem solving, higher order thinking, cross-disciplinary learning, and authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school

Recommendation

Establish methods to ensure alignment between the written and taught curriculum

Recommendation

Develop and implement protocols that ensure effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation between and among all academic areas within the school, as well as with sending schools

Recommendation

Provide sufficient staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, and resources and materials for the library/media center to ensure full implementation of the curriculum

Standard 3 Indicator 1

Conclusions

Sometimes teachers' instructional practices are examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. The school's core values and beliefs about learning are posted in every classroom and some activities are explicitly related to the expectations for student learning. For example, the expectation "become independent and self-directed learners" was frequently mentioned by student about their learning experiences, from teachers about their instructional practices, on many white boards in classrooms as part of the daily lesson information, and in rubrics for projects. Beginning in 2013, the core values, beliefs, and the 21st century learning expectations were written in all formal lesson plans, which routinely drive instruction. However, there is a lack of clarity by some teachers on the role for the school's beliefs. For example, one of the beliefs was listed on the whiteboard as an objective for the day, yet the lesson was not focused on this belief. Teachers reflect on their practices independently and collaboratively during their grade-level team meetings that occur multiple times per week for the middle school teachers and once per month for the high school teachers. The content of these meetings is about student progress and teachers informally address their own instructional practices that touch on their beliefs about learning. Teachers' continuous examination and reflection about instructional practices consistent with the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations will create accountability for student success on all curricular work.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The vast majority of teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by often personalizing instruction, engaging students as active and self-directed learners, engaging student in self-assessment and reflection, and integrating technology. Some teachers occasionally engage students in cross-disciplinary learning, inquiry-based learning, problem solving and higher order thinking, or applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks. Teachers pride themselves on creating personal relationships with students. Many students report that their teachers personalize their instruction and more than half report their teachers spend one-to-one time with them. The majority of teachers personalize instruction, which aligns with the strong relationships that occur in this small learning community. The staff is proud that they know the names of every individual student in the school. Students are actively engaged as self-directed learners with regular and frequent opportunities to exercise choice in topics as well as assessment and presentation modalities and the use of school-wide rubrics. The majority of students, 67.2 percent, agree their teachers give them opportunities to choose topics for some assignments. School-wide rubrics include a self-assessment component. The majority of students, 92.1 percent, report that their teachers provide them with opportunities to assess their own work. Seventy-six percent of students also report their teachers ask them to use technology in their assignments. There is a wide variety of technology available to teachers including SMART Boards, SMART televisions, and Chromebooks. Therefore, many teachers integrate technology in their instruction and expect students to use technology when completing assignments. Some teachers use interdisciplinary projects, particularly at the middle level. For example, an American Indian project addresses four content areas. Higher order thinking and authentic application is more prevalent in middle school as well as in the honors and Advanced Placement (AP) classes and the Capstone project at the high school level. Authentic applications are also the main focus for the career and technology education courses such as culinary arts and computer-aided design (CAD). According to the Endicott survey, 89.5 percent of staff report emphasizing inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking. A variety of these practices is used in different content area classes observed. For example, in a social studies class, students were directed to develop a marketing plan to promote and advertise key aspects of school citizenship that were connected to the school vision and mission. Students were prompted to use a variety of strategies that enabled them to use out of the box approaches to accomplish their goal. However, the coordination of these practices was identified as a desire by the teaching staff because they expressed that a school/department wide approach is desired. As a result of utilizing instructional practices that include personalized learning, engaging students as active self-directed learners, and involving students in self-assessment and reflection as well as integrating technology, students experience a rich learning environment; therefore, increasing the rigor and frequency of student engagement in higher order thinking skills, and inquiry-based learning will give students opportunities to develop and practice the 21st century expectations for student learning.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teachers
- Endicott survey

Standard 3 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Teachers frequently adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by using formative assessments during instruction, implementing group learning activities, and by providing additional support within the regular classroom after school. Employing strategic differentiation is developing. Most teachers in all grade levels often ask students to give evidence of their understanding on exit tickets and this information is used for individual student support and for planning the next lesson. The use of small white boards, thumbs up or thumbs down, and journal entries are also used as formative assessment strategies. Some promising practices using technology have been also used by individual teachers. Group work is often used for students to collaborate on problem solving and projects. According to the Endicott survey, 85 percent of students agree they experience this instructional strategy. In some areas teachers purposefully organize the student groups during learning activities to address learning needs and lesson goals. For example, in a math class students were partnered for solving different problems; then they circulated to a different partner to solve a different problem. Notably, teachers generously offer academic and emotional support to their students by establishing a trusting relationship that is demonstrated by many individual student-to-teacher conversations and offering after-school time almost daily for extra help. Differentiation has been a focus for staff professional development over the last three years and most of these sessions were focused on scientific research-based interventions (SRBI). Teachers frequently adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by using formative assessments during instruction, implementing group learning activities, and by providing additional support within the before, during and after school to meet the needs of each student; therefore, when teachers more extensively integrate differentiated instruction into their daily lessons, all students will be able to learn at high levels.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Some teachers individually, and to a more limited degree collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments, using feedback from other teachers and supervisors and occasionally from students and parents, examining limited current research, and engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice. The supportive relationships that exist across the school between students and teachers allow for honest, healthy interactions and extensive use of effective feedback on student academic performance and social behaviors. Teachers occasionally solicit from students and often give feedback to students in a variety of ways. Student peer review is often a part of this reflective assessment process. Teacher feedback on assignments are specific and when appropriate, immediate to allow students to use this information to improve their performance. Student self-assessment practices are integrated in many assignments including the school-wide rubrics and teachers individually counsel with students about their responses to align their perspective to the appropriate level of performance and to plan next steps for meeting expectations. Feedback from other teachers to inform instruction is solicited through voluntary classroom observation visits. These visits involve approximately a third of the faculty and occur on a volunteer basis. Participants are predominantly middle school and electives teachers. Feedback from supervisors is garnered through the supervision and evaluation process. Teachers find this process to be collaborative in nature with the advent of new administrators who provide useful guidance and feedback for improvement. There is limited teacher use of parent feedback with only 22.5 percent of parents who responded to the Endicott survey reporting being asked for feedback on teachers' instructional practices. Student achievement data from formative and summative assessments is used to a limited degree to improve instructional practices, more so at the middle school. STAR Reading and Math benchmark data is gathered across the majority of grade levels to assess student achievement and ascertain student need. Use of formative and summative assessment data from the middle school content areas is used to improve instructional practices. The middle school also participates in professional discourse focused on instructional practice to an extensive degree through daily team meetings both within and across content areas. Teachers at the high school level do not have the opportunity to participate in professional discourse other than monthly professional learning community (PLC) meetings and little additional opportunity to collaborate. During the PLC meeting there is not much time scheduled for ongoing collaboration to improve instructional practices by analyzing achievement data from a variety of sources. There are areas where teachers have examined current research to improve instructional practices. Research-based practices used to inform school decision-making have primarily focused on using the *Understanding by Design* curriculum framework and exploring differentiated instruction. The majority of professional development opportunities have been teacher driven and teacher delivered with limited professional development accessed in specific content areas for the purpose of improving instruction. The opportunity to engage in either vertical or horizontal alignment for the purposes of improving instructional practices occasionally occurs within the school. Consistently providing all teachers the opportunity, individually and collaboratively, to improve instructional practices by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments, examining student work, using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents, examining current research, and engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice will support and benefit teaching and learning.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing

- student work
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 3 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices. According to the Endicott survey, staff, students, and parents believe teachers maintain expertise in their subject areas and are knowledgeable in the subjects they teach. There are monthly department meetings at which there is collegial sharing, monthly faculty meetings, and two colleague observation days per year. About ten teachers participate in the observation days. The reading specialist/scientific research-based interventions (SRBI) coordinator provides a substantial amount of in-house professional development in the areas of differentiation and reading strategies. Teachers also use webinars such as one on differentiated instruction led by Carol Ann Tomlinson and a few on the Next Generation Science Standards coordinated by the Connecticut Department of Education. A popular teacher-led sharing of best practices professional development event was considered by teachers to be interesting and useful. There are a few consultants from University of Connecticut and Eastern Connecticut State University brought in for professional learning in targeted areas and for ongoing support. Teachers attend regional conferences in their content areas. A recent survey of teachers resulted in the formation of a list of nine professional practices that will be explored in future professional learning community meetings. As a result, teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices that will benefit students.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- students
- parents
- department leaders

Standard 3 Commendations

Commendation

The use of personalized learning and engaging students as active and self-directed learners, which contributes to a positive learning environment

Commendation

The use of student self-assessment, particularly through the use of the school-wide rubrics

Commendation

The frequent adjustment of instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by using formative assessments during instruction, implementing group learning activities, and the extensive support within the regular classroom and after school

Commendation

The core values and beliefs that are visible everywhere in multiple modalities and referred to often during instruction

Commendation

The extensive use of additional supports both during and after school to meet the instructional needs of each student

Commendation

The use of feedback from students, peers, and supervisors to inform instructional practices

Commendation

The sharing of areas of expertise collegially and in a collaborative manner

Standard 3 Recommendations

Recommendation

Ensure teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values and beliefs

Recommendation

Devise and employ differentiated instructional strategies in all classes to meet the needs of all students

Recommendation

Ensure all teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve instructional practices by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments, examining student work, using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents, examining current research, and engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice

Recommendation

Develop further capacity for implementing inquiry-based learning and facilitating development of higher order thinking skills

Standard 4 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The professional staff often employs a formal process, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. Although school-wide data is widely collected, there is limited use of the data school-wide to assess school progress. There are seven school-wide rubrics which have been approved by the faculty and used at a 97 percent rate as reported by the Endicott survey. Departments have been assigned primary responsibility for using the rubrics. In addition, teachers are required to use at least two rubrics on two separate occasions during the semester. In a seventh grade English class, the speaking rubric was used to evaluate speeches. A tenth grade history teacher uses the writing rubric. A chemistry teachers uses the problem-solving rubric in the lab work. However, several students report that expectations based on rubrics vary among teachers. In addition, teachers adapt the school-wide rubric or use additional rubrics to assess individual student progress. Teachers create situational rubrics for specific purposes in conjunction with the school-wide rubrics. Teachers may add to the school-wide rubrics and when creating these situational teacher-made rubrics, they may not change them. Over the past two years, teachers will be required to report out on benchmark data based on the school-wide rubrics, which will be used to assess whole-school progress through the use of a developed common form that is managed by the guidance office. When the professional staff continuously employs a formal and consistent process based on school-wide rubrics to assess whole-school and individual student progress, the 21st century learning expectations can be accurately assessed.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school's professional staff communicates individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families in various ways. The school's professional staff, in some areas, communicates the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community. This is done in the form of parent meetings and communications that are sent home to families. Students and families are provided several different forms of communication regarding progress toward 21st century learning expectations. Although significant effort was made to determine mechanisms to share 21st learning expectations with parents, a technical glitch prohibited sharing of this information with parents. Each department is responsible for assessing all of their students with their designated rubric twice per semester and reporting each student's progress per indicator in PowerSchool, which is a web-based portal. Both students and families are encouraged to access student grades on PowerSchool. In addition, parent conferences are held once a semester, through which teachers communicate student progress toward 21st century learning expectations to students' families. Moreover, according to the Endicott survey, 70.3 percent of parents feel that the school provides them with a formal report, in addition to course grades, which explains their children's progress in achieving school-wide 21st century learning expectations. The school's professional staff communicates individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families; therefore, reporting whole-school progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community will provide data to inform future revisions to curriculum, instruction, and assessment to enhance achievement of the learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement in a limited way. State summative assessment results are disaggregated by grade level and student to determine each student's strengths and weaknesses. For example, the seventh grade team uses STAR math scores to differentiate materials and instruction. In a seventh grade social studies class, the teacher uses an online program that differentiates texts based on Lexile levels during instruction. Additionally, the middle school teams meet as grade-level teams and discuss data from STAR reports. Students that are determined to be at-risk by STAR's designation of such, are assigned to scientific research-based interventions (SRBI) placement, such as remedial classes or assignment to homework club. Homework club meets Tuesday and Thursday from 2:30 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. weekly and some middle school teachers volunteer to provide students with extra help. The club can be assigned due to a student's need. One high school teacher disaggregated PSAT data, according to standard and pacing, due to a low median score reported for the class. This information was shared with the math department to improve instruction and achievement. Efforts will be made in this upcoming year to work with the English department to repeat this same task. The English language learners (ELL) teacher described the high school process for referring students to SRBI. If a student is identified as at-risk, based on the STAR assessment, the ELL teacher will request and analyze data from content teachers to determine intervention strategies. The middle school counselor is able to access all state testing data from the three sending elementary schools. Additionally, math teachers at the elementary school level recommend students for Pre-Algebra based on Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) scores. Although there is some data collection and the school's five-year plan includes the creation of data teams, current use of data school-wide and at the high school level is limited. When all professional staff has opportunities to collect, disaggregate, and analyze data in a systematic, formal way, teachers will be able to regularly identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Prior to each unit of study, many teachers in some areas communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed. The 21st century learning expectations are posted in each classroom and teachers link daily lessons to specific learning expectations. Unit plans have 21st century learning expectations included. Many teachers ask students to articulate connections between what is learned in class and the 21st century learning expectations, in addition to posting unit objectives, goals, and/or essential questions in the classroom. These goals are expressed in terms of the core values and beliefs, Common Core State Standards, criteria or skill-based goals, or curriculum-specific goals. Further, the Endicott survey reveals that over 70 percent of students agree that their teachers notify them of goals and learning expectations prior to each unit of study. In a seventh grade English class, expectations were posted and linked to the objectives being taught in class. Students report that some teachers consistently post and refer to learning expectations. In a seventh grade math class, learning expectations were posted and stated at the beginning of the lesson; however, there was no objective posted and no connection to unit-specific learning goals. Eleventh grade advisory lessons are based on civic and social expectations. A student shared that almost all teachers have 21st century learning expectations posted in the classroom and remind students about them. Prior to each unit of study, teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed; therefore, students see the relevancy of the curriculum and understand what they are supposed to know and be able to do.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 5

Conclusions

The vast majority of teachers provide students with specific and measurable criteria to define targeted high levels of achievement prior to some summative assessments. Various summative assessments are used by teachers, such as unit tests, presentations, cumulative as well as competency-based individual and group projects, essays, artwork portfolios, music performances, and a senior Capstone project. Teachers give rubrics to students prior to summative assessments. However, the school does not yet have a formal process to target these rubrics toward high levels of achievement. Currently, all students use the same school-wide rubrics. Considering the rubrics are relatively new, many students are adept at working with the rubrics. According to the Endicott survey, 77.3 percent of students report that their teachers use rubrics to assess their work, and 76.9 percent agree that they understand in advance what work they have to accomplish to meet their teacher's expectations. Each teacher is responsible for two or more of the school-wide rubrics; however, any teacher may use any and all the rubrics needed. The music and chorus teachers use extensive rubrics for evaluating student performance. The world languages teachers use the Middlebury College Language School assessment tools. Teachers introduce and review the rubrics at the beginning of the year or before a summative assessment, at times highlighting important aspects of the rubric so that students have a good idea of what is expected. For instance, the problem-solving rubric is pasted inside students' lab journals and in English classes students are given the speaking rubric before an oral presentation. Exemplars illustrating acceptable as well as unacceptable submissions may also be provided. A high school social studies teacher uses rubrics in assessing document-based questions (DBQs). Prior to the summative DBQ assignment, students are provided with exemplars and the rubric. Prior to summative assessments, teachers provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success, such as corresponding rubrics; however, when the rubrics define targeted high levels of achievement, students will experience greater rigor.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 6

Conclusions

In each unit of study, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments. Teachers consistently employ formative and summative assessment to gauge and monitor students during the learning process. Several departments, such as music, accounting, and world languages use software or online programs that provide immediate feedback to students. Some programs give more detailed feedback. For example, the accounting classes use Aplia, a computer software program which provides feedback and a detailed explanation for every answer. The world languages teachers use Middlebury College Language Schools software to monitor students' speaking, listening, and writing skills. The teachers can also provide written feedback below the student's assignment as well as recorded feedback. SMART Music, a self-grading music learning software program is available to students on three computers in the music room. In classrooms across grades 8-12, teachers use a variety of formative assessments. In a seventh grade science classroom, the teacher used a game where students silently matched their vocabulary to another student's definition of that vocabulary word. Middle school English and math teachers use informal checks such as online quiz programs, mini-white boards, thumbs up/thumbs down to check for understanding during instruction. At the high school level, teachers develop common end-of-course assessments and use state assessment data to inform instruction. Teachers across the school setting utilize additional summative assessments such as individual assignments, projects, essays and reports, research papers, and midterm and final course assessments. Occasionally exemplars illustrating acceptable as well as unacceptable submissions may also be provided. Some teachers use warm-up exercises and exit tickets. For example, in a middle school math classroom, the teacher assisted students with the exit tickets. A few students report that some teachers report warm-up and exit tickets grades on PowerSchool. This lets the students know if they "get it." When in each unit of study, all teachers across grade levels employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments, student progress can be more fully monitored.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 7

Conclusions

Teachers, in some areas, collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments. High school teachers meet in grade-level teams monthly. The senior Capstone project is an example of collaboration about assessment strategies. Capstone committee members work together to evaluate and revise the Capstone rubric and manual as needed. The Capstone presentation rubric has been revised each year by the Capstone committee. Middle school teams meet four times per week to collaborate about instruction, student progress, and discussion of data. Special education of teachers collaborate in formal ways on creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments. A high school science teacher creates three versions of tests and collaborates with the special education teacher to ensure accommodations and modifications are made for special needs students. Some teachers collaborate about and reflect on midterm exams and provide written evidence of that reflection. Also, common assessments for each course are used in the math and science departments but not in other departments. The school has made a goal to employ more opportunities for cross-curricular assessment collaboration in the upcoming school year. When teachers formally collaborate and practice the creation, use, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, student performance can be accurately evaluated and compared across departments.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 8

Conclusions

Teachers frequently provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work. Teachers consistently employ a wide variety of methods to communicate with students regarding their progress toward meeting course and school-wide standards and to prepare them to effectively revise and improve on their work. These methods include, verbal and written feedback, graphic organizers that track teacher and peer feedback, digital comments and edits for work submitted online, and in many cases, joint student-teacher evaluation for student work using school-wide rubrics. Some online formative assessments used in the classroom provide immediate feedback to students. An art teacher uses verbal and written feedback very frequently and often uses tracing paper to help a student revise and improve work. Further, the music teacher uses an online program to help students receive immediate feedback and suggestions to improve performance. World languages teachers use an online program to enhance student learning that includes assessment. Middle school English teachers provided comments written on a speaking rubric, which was returned the day after the presentation was given. Various teachers provide comments on rubrics. Art and music rubrics have comment sections included on the rubric. As a result of teachers frequently providing specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work, students are able to develop deeper knowledge.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 9

Conclusions

Teachers consistently use formative assessment techniques in the classroom and use the results to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving learning. Teachers in most areas in the middle school and high school indicate the use of available meeting time to review exit tickets, quizzes, and other department-adopted formative models of checking for understanding for the purpose of adapting instruction. Additionally, in a seventh grade math classroom, exit tickets were given and the teacher assisted students in completing them. The eighth-grade English and special education co-teachers use results from Quizlet to break students into smaller groups for reteaching. In a middle school English classroom, students give peer feedback on speeches. The teacher collected the student feedback and it revealed that the student feedback was of poor quality. The teacher then created a lesson to provide students with practice on giving feedback. This lesson used the actual poor quality feedback, anonymously, and had students reflect, learn, and revise it. The music teacher used the results of a formative assessment to determine difficulty of selected music. At times, the music needs to be adjusted or additional supports like smaller ensemble groups need to be assembled in order to improve performance. There are online formative assessment activities in social studies that provide immediate feedback. The results of these online assessments are quickly garnered by teachers and used for purposes of improving student learning. The consistent use of a variety of formative assessments and analysis of results provides teachers with the information necessary to adapt instruction to improve student learning.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 10

Conclusions

Teachers, in some areas, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice including student work; common course and common grade-level assessments; individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations; standardized assessments; data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions; and survey data from current students and alumni. Student performance data on midterm and final analyses suggest curriculum modifications are suggested and made; however, it is unclear if a formal process resulted in curriculum change or improvement of instructional practice. While there is curriculum review and revision completed by teachers, there is limited administrative coordination of these efforts. Teacher reflections on midterm and final exams include information about the current year's test scores and revision suggestions for the following year. A high school math teacher, in response to sub-par PSAT scores, correlated results from each question to the subject and unit it was taught, and then developed lessons to reteach the material. This work was shared with colleagues within and beyond the department. A middle school English teacher collects student work in a student portfolio for the purpose of improvement of practice. The middle school teams regularly analyze individual and grade-level progress in achieving learning expectations as well as standardized assessments. These analyses provide the middle school teams with evidence for improvement of practice or curricula modifications. All teachers use a range of student evidence for the creation of their SMART goals. Additionally, teachers collaborate with administrators and revise these goals for the purpose of improving instruction practice. There is data received from post-secondary institutions, but collected data is not used a formal way to revise curriculum or to improve instructional practice. Students regularly complete a needs assessment survey; however, this data is not used in a formal way to inform curricular and pedagogical practices. According to the Endicott survey, 67.3 percent of teachers and administrators say they examine a variety and range of student work, common course assessments, common grade-level assessments, and standardized assessments to revise and improve curriculum and instructional practices. When all teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning including student work; common course and common grade-level assessments; individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations; standardized assessments; data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions; and survey data from current students and alumni, the school will be able to make evidence-based decisions in revising curriculum and improving instructional practice.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 11

Conclusions

Review and revision of grading and reporting practices to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning is infrequent. Thirty-four percent of the professional staff agrees that school-wide grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised. Teachers' current grading policies vary from teacher to teacher and the grading practices are not consistent among courses, teachers, and levels. At this time, conversations about grading policies and standards-based grading are evolving within the school. The professional development committee administered a survey last year through which teachers indicated the need for a professional learning community (PLC) to review grading policies. This year, the PLC was formed and will meet six times, during professional development days, to discuss grading practices and inequities. In addition, five teachers attended a standards-based grading workshop last year and four teachers will attend this year. Since the inception of the school-wide rubrics, teachers believe students' grades and expectations have improved. Some teachers allow students to make up assessments and assignments while others do not. For example, the make-up work for a math class is a take-home quiz and the highest grade is used. When used, the rubrics are very helpful in communicating teacher expectations and provide some consistency among grading as indicated by parents and students. PowerSchool allows parents and guardians to engage in reviewing students' progress and allows students to take more responsibility for their learning. Grades are posted in a timely manner. Regularly reviewing and revising grading and reporting practices aligned to the school's core values and beliefs about learning will ensure all students are graded equitably and with the same degree of academic rigor.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- Endicott survey

Standard 4 Commendations

Commendation

The consistent communication with parents and students regarding individual student progress in achieving 21st century learning expectations

Commendation

The consistent use of middle school meeting time for teachers to analyze data and to respond to inequities in student learning

Commendation

The regular collaboration on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments by special education teachers

Commendation

The communication of the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed prior to each unit of study

Commendation

The use of a variety of strategies to assess student learning

Commendation

The rubrics, scoring guides, and review guides that are provided before summative assessments and the students' awareness of rubrics

Commendation

The use of PowerSchool to provide parents and students with timely feedback about grades

Commendation

The consistent, immediate, and various methods of corrective feedback provided to students daily

Commendation

The consistent use of a variety of formative assessments and analysis of results that provides teachers with the information necessary to adapt instruction to improve student learning

Standard 4 Recommendations

Recommendation

Employ a formal and consistent process, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess whole-school progress toward achievement of the 21st century learning expectations

Recommendation

Develop and implement a method for teachers to formally collaborate and practice the creation, use, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments

Recommendation

Review and revise grading and reporting practices regularly to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning

Recommendation

Ensure all professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement

Standard 5 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The school community has created a safe, positive, and respectful learning environment where students are increasingly engaged in a culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership and pride and high social expectations. The school has gone through a significant evolution in recent years with changes in staffing and leadership. The new administrative team has taken significant steps in creating a community of individuals devoted to student success. Teachers report that they feel respected, trusted, and valued, which is having an increased impact on student success and pride in their school. Parents believe the school is safe and students feel that they are part of a “family”; this word choice was repeated by a wide variety of stakeholders. The student handbook clearly delineates the school's core values, the student code of conduct, and behavioral expectations. These expectations are also visibly present in all classrooms and hallways. The administrative team is viewed by parents and students as fair and equitable in following the code of conduct and applying disciplinary actions. After significant events, the administrative team often meets with the faculty to discuss school issues and solicits feedback from a variety of community members. Because of the broad application of the school values, improved scientific research-based interventions (SRBI), and an increase in communication, the number of suspensions have decreased significantly. The faculty uses a variety of indicators including grades, attendance, and assessments to identify at-risk students. The tracking of behavioral data and the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) model has only been partially implemented, but will continue to be a priority in the future. The facility has been analyzed by the Connecticut State Police and security measures have been implemented by adding security cameras, clearing sight lines, and building a security kiosk at the main entrance. Students and staff know the security procedures for evacuations and shelter in place scenarios.

The school community is truly committed to reaching every learner. The small class size and individual attention allows all students the opportunity to grow and feel valued and respected. All stakeholders believe that students with special needs are well integrated into the community and make significant progress in their educational growth. After years of limited parent communication, the new principal created a parent-teacher organization (PTO) which is heavily active in all aspects of the learning community. They volunteer their time to meet with the administration to help develop goals for the district and school. Parents spent large portions of their summer improving the physical plant, painting classrooms, landscaping and generally improving the visual appearance of a school that is close to 50 years old. This new partnership has had a profound impact on how all the stakeholders feel about the community and its future. An increase in community support has been showcased at events like Empty Bowls, which is a national fundraiser for soup kitchens, celebrating veterans, sporting events, and a community parade where 100 students assembled and marched alongside three floats, which celebrated “Pirate Pride.” Many of these programs are lead by students or by student groups. Because the school community consciously and continuously employed efforts to improve culture and climate, the creation of a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture where students have taken responsibility for their own learning results in shared ownership, pride, and high social expectations for all.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- students
- parents

- community members
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The Parish Hill Middle High School is equitable and inclusive, promoting access to challenging academic experiences for most students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. At the middle school level, all students are heterogeneously grouped and organized by teams, ensuring significant inclusion and appropriate tiered intervention strategies. At the high school level, students participate in three mandated heterogeneous classes, World History, Integrated Science, and Civics. Additionally, electives are heterogeneously grouped and supported by special educators to facilitate inclusive classrooms. The school's counselors know students personally and encourage all students to take courses that are appropriate and challenging. Parish Hill has no restrictions or pre-requisites for students who would like to enroll in Advanced Placement (AP) classes. In a business class, students created a personalized poster identifying how the core educational values are meaningful and specific to each learner. This activity was differentiated for diverse learning abilities and personalized based on interests. The school community takes great pride in its inclusion and support of diverse learners academically, socially, and athletically. Parents made several comments that their children feel as if they are a part of a family. There were multiple examples of faculty, students, and coaches reaching out to students with special needs and making them feel valued as members of the community to foster equity. Additionally, there is a culture where upperclassmen serve as mentors and role models for diverse learners. Programs like the homework club are well attended by students and supported by faculty on a voluntary basis. Parents and teachers agree that, at Parish Hill, "students do not fall through the cracks." Because the school strives to ensure that all students have access to equitable and inclusive courses that promote heterogeneity; therefore, ensuring that all learners are appropriately challenged academically will provide opportunities for all students to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- school leadership
- school support staff

Standard 5 Indicator 3

Conclusions

There is a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. The Pirate Activities That Harness Success (PATHS) program is a comprehensive curriculum that promotes the school's core values and culminates with the Capstone experience. Every two years students are assigned to a specific teacher who mentors seven to ten students and shepherds them through a variety of activities that promote personal growth, college and career readiness, and an inclusive school environment. This program is foundational in the implementation and usage of the school-wide rubrics, 21st century learning expectations, and a positive shift in school culture. Students meet once a week and participate in the development of interpersonal skills, time management, goal setting, academic success plans, acceptance of diversity, and problem solving. This program is viewed clearly as a flagship of the curriculum and elicits remarkable support. According to the Endicott survey, 89.5 percent of teachers report that they actively participate as a mentor, and 94 percent of students feel like they have a connection with one adult, in addition to the school counselor. Students express that PATHS has a rich, cumulative value, which provides an evolution of skills vital to their future success. The Capstone curriculum is comprehensive and valuable to students. During the senior year, students select a personalized inquiry-based question, complete research and analysis, then draft an eight to ten page research paper, which is presented and defended toward the end of the year, as it is required for graduation. Expectations for this Capstone experience are differentiated to meet student needs, and multiple students report that Capstone is the most challenging and helpful process in their educational experience. Through the formal, ongoing PATHS program, each student has a connection with a caring adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and provides each student with the opportunity to develop and achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- students
- parents
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Indicator 4

Conclusions

In an attempt to support student learning through professional development opportunities, the principal and the professional staff engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning; use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices; dedicate formal time to implement professional development; and apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment. These professional development opportunities have assisted in providing common language and consistent focus areas at Parish Hill. The new administrative team fosters opportunities for collaborative planning, which have been positively received. The new administrators are responsive to the faculty's professional development needs. Most requests for professional development opportunities are supported and welcomed. The positive collaboration between faculty and administration, fostered by administrators led to conducting a survey addressing the professional needs of the teachers. The survey was conducted during the summer of 2016. The professional development committee, created prior to the survey, analyzed the collected data and made recommendations to administrators for the high interest areas. The district is currently exploring professional learning communities (PLCs) based on the top areas of demand indicated by the survey. The administrators are also exploring a schedule change to improve collaborative opportunities. Teachers initiate opportunities for professional development and assess the effectiveness of those offerings on a regular basis. There is an ongoing effort to keep staff informed of current applicable professional development opportunities. Professional readings relevant to 21st century learning expectations are provided to the faculty by the administrators on regular basis. Departments meet once a month and use the time to discuss various school initiatives including, but not limited to, discussions involving curriculum, teaching strategies, and evaluation of student work. The skills, practices, and ideas gained from professional development are not yet fully applied in every classroom to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment. There is a high percentage of veteran teachers trained as mentors who work with new teachers to provide an ongoing support. The current teacher evaluation process supports professional development opportunities. Professional development opportunities can be suggested to teachers through the evaluation process as well. Although there is progress in this area, a systemic professional development model has yet to be fully in place. There is significant progress implementing professional development that empowers the professional staff to engage in a reflective inquiry and analysis of teaching and learning; therefore, by fully incorporating resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices; dedicating formal time to implement professional development; and applying the skills, practices, and ideas gained, curriculum, instruction, and assessment will improve.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 5

Conclusions

School leaders use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning. The evaluation system based on the EASTCONN model, which was previously approved by the Connecticut (CT) State Department of Education's System for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED) model, is aligned to the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching rubric for effective teaching. Teachers are observed both formally and informally by the principal, who uses the district-adopted evaluation model. Tenured teachers are observed formally and informally on a cycled basis, while non-tenured and first and second year teachers are formally observed three times a year, in conjunction with one informal observation. All formal observations are preceded by a pre-conference scheduled with the teacher to provide feedback and clarity. Teacher goals and expectations are aligned to the 21st century learning expectations. The principal is very supportive and helpful to teachers when goals are formulated and data collection decisions are made. A midyear conference is used to assess goal progress and to suggest future benchmarks. Professional development is often recommended during the conference. Informal observations conducted by administrators on regular basis are appreciated and supported by the learning community and they positively impact the school's culture. During drop-ins, administrators are always positive and commend achievements of students and teachers. The Endicott survey indicates that 65.5 percent of teachers feel that the teaching evaluation plan in place is essential to improving instructional practices. All outcomes of the teacher evaluation process are recorded in a program, My Learning Plan. The program allows evaluators and teachers to upload goals, lesson plans, any documents needed and used during the lesson, and the evidence collected by the evaluator. Because school leaders use a well established and research-based teacher evaluation plan, it supports and ensures the implementation of teaching practices that positively impact teaching and student learning.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 6

Conclusions

The school is currently revising and evaluating the organization of time to support research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students. At the middle school level, each grade is organized by teams, which meet four times per week to discuss student progress, assessments, and best practices. This very effective model is desired at the high school level. The committed and dedicated staff at the high school have a formal opportunity to meet and collaborate once a month by team, but much of their interdisciplinary interaction happens informally and on a voluntary basis. This yields significant positive outcomes as teachers have several interdisciplinary lessons that are integrated with cross-curricular learning objectives. The new administrators have provided opportunities after school to discuss student progress and to develop strategies and interventions. However, teachers report not having enough collaborative time to vertically align curriculum. Several teachers are writing their own curriculum and would welcome the assistance to improve curriculum coordination. Data is currently being collected via PowerSchool, but administrators and staff recognize that they need more collaborative time to analyze student achievement and implement responsive and effective interventions. The team of teachers and administrators effectively collaborate via the middle school teams and as a small close knit community at the high school; therefore, the organization of time to further support research-based instruction and professional collaboration will ensure the learning needs of all students are being fully met.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- central office personnel
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 7

Conclusions

The student load and class size enable the teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. One of the strengths is the small class sizes, which provide opportunities for differentiated teaching and learning. According to the Endicott survey, 85.2 percent of students agree that class sizes in their courses are reasonable, and 71 percent of staff agree that class size enable them to meet the learning needs of individual students. There are 27 regular education teachers, 5 special education teachers, and 11 paraprofessionals. The student-to-teacher ratio is 9.6 to 1. The special education student-to-teacher ratio is 8.8 to 1. The teachers are able to address and meet the learning needs of all students. Each year the school's master schedule is built based on student needs and teacher recommendations. The guidance department makes every effort to accommodate all student requests. As a result, a variety of classes are offered, which keeps class sizes small. This allows teachers to provide differentiated instruction. Most of the teachers at have multiple preparations due to the small size of the school and the programs offered. Additionally, numerous classes are offered online and supported through the FuelEd program. Additional individual support to students is offered after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Teachers refer students to the scientific research-based interventions (SRBI) team for support if needed. SRBI intervention time is built into the academic schedule. As a result, the student load and small class size enable teachers to meet most of the needs of individual students.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- parents
- community members
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 8

Conclusions

The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. In the 2013-2014 school year, the administrative team created an ad hoc core values committee to create and implement the school's current academic and social expectations. This team facilitated the development of the school-wide rubrics, which were edited and revised by the entire faculty in subcommittees. The school's core values are clearly visible, known by faculty and students, and well measured by a variety of indicators. The current principal and assistant principal are forging a new era of good feelings amongst the staff and student population. The administrators serve as role models of the values that they expect of their students and actively participate as members of the learning community. They greet the students each morning, know all of them by first name, and model acceptance of diverse learners. The administrative team has an open door policy, students and faculty are responsive to suggestions to improve learning outcomes including student-led events, teacher leadership initiatives, and teacher-focused professional development. The administrators identified key teachers who serve as team leaders at the middle school level and department chairs at the high school level. The key teachers facilitate meaningful discussion about students, curriculum, assessment, and interventions. The seventh and eighth grade teams have a greater focus on student achievement and intervention, while the high school focuses on assessment, curriculum, and logistics. During department meetings, the principal regularly provides educational journals, studies, and articles to encourage a growth mindset for the staff. Each Wednesday the principal and SRBI coordinator hosts voluntary grade-level team meetings; each grade meets once per month. These meetings are not mandatory by contract but are well attended and support the core values and expectations for learning. The principal and leadership team are making progress in providing instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 9

Conclusions

Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership. Each academic department has a key teacher who facilitates monthly department meetings. During department time opportunities to address curriculum needs exist, but currently there is no system in place to support alignment and revision of the curriculum. Teaching practices and student learning are evaluated. Also, during department meetings, feedback from teachers is solicited and collected. Department meeting time is used to identify department budget needs. The principal oversees the financial needs of the departments and prepares a combined budget. The administration is very sensitive to the financial needs of each department. The principal meets with key teachers once a month to address current issues and faculty requests. The increased administrative support has positively impacted school climate and serves as a sound base for building and establishing a cohesive working environment. Each staff member creates his/her own professional goals and teachers feel supported by the principal during the evaluation process. The principal promotes staff and faculty engagement in various committees such as the school health committee, the NEASC committees, and others. Teachers are encouraged to apply for and coordinate grants such as the Durational Shortage Area Permit and Perkins Grant. Parish Hill was awarded a \$130,000 state grant for the Video Communications class, which has promoted student-centered learning and is showcased each day via morning announcements. Students have an active role in decision making by promoting ownership of their school and community. Students are active participants in student government, National Honor Society, and a variety of leadership programs available to students. Class officers regularly meet with the principal to share ideas regarding school events. A positive relationship exists between the principal and the student body. The principal plays an important role in establishing and maintaining positive collaboration with families, students, and school staff. This initiative has been a focal area of improvement at Parish Hill Middle High School. The principal successfully initiated a parent advisory council (PAC) during the 2015-2016 school year. PAC serves as an opportunity for parents, teachers, and administrators to meet and discuss student achievements. As a result, PAC is a successful tool ensuring positive communication between school and parents. Parents have multiple opportunities to meet with school administration and teachers at different events such as coffee with the principal, open house, and parent-teacher conferences. The principal has an open door policy through which teacher and parent initiatives are discussed and supported. According to the Endicott survey, 60 percent of parents agree that they have opportunities to be involved in the decision-making process at the school. Parents can meet with teachers and administrators during parent-teacher conferences, and on an as-needed basis to discuss student progress. Several stakeholder surveys are conducted during the year to gather information on school climate and culture. The data are used by administrators to help inform school decisions. The administrative team has made significant progress initiating, establishing, and maintaining a positive school climate reflective of the school's vision and mission, and maintaining a positive line of communication between parents and school. The school's involvement of students, parents, and teachers in the decision-making process is having a meaningful impact on shared responsibility and ownership through creating and promoting the school's vision, mission, and 21st century expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- parents

- community members
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 10

Conclusions

Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning. Administrators welcome and support numerous teacher- and faculty-led initiatives. Many initiatives have been recommended and implemented by the teacher community. The faculty serves on numerous committees such as the professional development committee and NEASC committees. Some serve as key teachers. Many teachers are advisors of various clubs. The initiatives serve as a solid base for establishing and reinforcing positive relationships among teachers, students, and administrators. The cohesive environment that has been established reinforces the positive school climate essential to effective teaching and student learning. Teachers consistently offer solutions to concerns rather than lament about problems that could be facing the school. Teachers initiated a variety of field trips to increase experiential learning opportunities by visiting the Body Exhibit in Hartford and the Newport mansions, and through business trips to New York and Boston. Two new classes were offered, Forensics and Environmental Science to support increased student interest. The student academics and wellness (SAW) club serves as an after-school opportunity for students to experience growth in the learning process along with physical and social exercise. The Parishutes, a mentoring opportunity for students to mentor other students meet twice a week after school to mentor students with specific academic needs. Model United Nations is a teacher-led group that encourages student engagement by role playing international diplomacy, culminating in an academic competition in New York. Another example of teacher initiative is the annual blood drive contest, in which various high schools in the area compete for the best donor turnout. Several members of the faculty are certified to teach College Connections and Early College Education, through which students can attain college credits. As a result of teachers being involved in committees and activities that lead to school improvement and increased student engagement, the school supports its students in their engagement with and achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 11

Conclusions

The school board, superintendent, and principal are increasingly collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. As Parish Hill engaged stakeholders in the school's mission, core values, learning expectations statements, the school board was an active participant, which culminated in a vote of support. The principal meets weekly with the superintendent to discuss district goals and strategic planning. At times, those meetings include the assistant principal and the elementary school principal depending on the superintendent's agenda. The superintendent establishes an annual goal and the administrative team has developed a two-year and five-year plan. The annual goals have included professional development on *Understanding by Design*, curriculum writing, differentiation, and standards-based assessment. The two-year plan includes goals to improve the physical plant by improving communication and efficiency of the maintenance team. Additionally, the school is looking to revise and create a master schedule that will allow high school teachers more collaborative time and opportunities to analyze student learning. A vital component of this plan in Parish Hill's future success is to create procedures for teachers to provide input into school-wide decisions and the development of rigorous, vertically aligned curriculum supported by a curriculum coordinator. The five-year plan includes major capital expenditure to improve the physical plant and significant instructional improvements including the formal creation of data teams, a revised SRBI process, and a formal five-year curriculum review process. Being a small district with limited resources, stakeholders recognized the necessity of creating more opportunities for student experiences and coursework. Working with EASTCONN and the local community, the superintendent and previous building administrators developed opportunities for student learning through the College Board, FuelEd, Middlebury Language Schools, and Quinebaug Valley Community College. These actions were supported by all stakeholders and had a positive impact on diversifying learning opportunities and assisting students with credit retrieval. The superintendent and principal have been reflective and collaborative in making significant progress in developing short- and long-term plans in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 12

Conclusions

The superintendent and school board have gradually increased the principal's decision-making authority to lead the school. According to the Endicott survey, 10.5 percent of teachers agree that the principal has adequate autonomy to lead the school. The superintendent's active presence in the high school creates confusion regarding administrative duties and responsibilities. To sustain the process of school improvement, teachers identified that the current school administrators set a tone for the future and this is supported by central office administrators in promoting staff-directed professional development and decision-making at the building level. The current administrators have created significant momentum within the learning community. Parents, teachers, and students commented on the positive change in school climate. Although significant progress has been made to increase the principal's ability to act autonomously, the school climate and culture will be positively impacted from an increase in the principal's decision-making authority to lead the school through greater collaboration with the school board and central office administrators.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- community members
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Commendations

Commendation

The significant progress made by the administrative team in building a community of learners committed to the school's core values and the creation of a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership and pride for all

Commendation

The emotional and educational support afforded to students from a dedicated and caring faculty that makes students feel as if they are among family

Commendation

The PATHS program which is effective in implementing the core values and essential learning goals of the school and community

Commendation

The opportunities provided for teachers to explore and pursue relevant and meaningful professional development

Commendation

The effective use of a modified version of the EASTCONN RESC model to evaluate teachers

Commendation

The informal and formal collaboration efforts, analysis, and intervention strategies used by the middle school teams

Commendation

The small class size, use of differentiation, and individual attention to assure academic and emotional support to students

Commendation

The active engagement in promoting the school's core values and beliefs through the instructional leadership of building leaders

Commendation

The meaningful and defined roles in decision making by teachers, students, and parents

Commendation

The initiative and leadership of teachers to improve school climate and to increase student engagement in learning

Standard 5 Recommendations

Recommendation

Ensure the organization of time further supports research-based instruction and professional collaboration among teachers at all grade levels to fully meet the learning needs of all students

Recommendation

Ensure the school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's century learning expectations

Recommendation

Provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school

Standard 6 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The school has intervention strategies for all students that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations, but has yet to achieve timely, and fully coordinated and directive services for all students. Among students who responded to the Endicott survey, 23.7 percent of tenth graders agree that the school meets the needs of all students. Fifty-five percent of seventh graders agree, but less than 50 percent of the other grades concur. In contrast, 78.9 percent of responding staff agree that the school has timely, coordinated, and direct intervention strategies for all students, including special education, 504, and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's learning expectations. The school utilizes some aspects of Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS), although a complete framework is not in place. A vestige of PBIS is the Pirate Pride acronym. Pirate Pride focuses on three core attributes: respect, safety, and responsibility. Students are recognized for positive behavior through a Pirate Pride referral, which is then reviewed in a one-to-one meeting with the student and principal; the referral is displayed on the Pirate Pride bulletin boards outside of student services and by the library; a copy of the referral is sent home to parents. Struggling high school students can participate in a summer credit recovery program offered at the school. This online program runs for four weeks during the summer at a very reasonable cost to allow students to gain lost credit. There are Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) math and writing lab classes available to all middle school students and by arrangement for high school students. When there are scheduling conflicts students use "X block," which is a weekly open block, to access the extra support. Students who do not have a specific need during X block remain with their advisory teachers by default, but students identified as requiring tier 2 or tier 3 interventions can have that time in these resources. Students are sometimes formally referred and there is a referral form, but they are often referred informally by verbal or email communication among staff. Because the school has established timely, coordinated, and directive interventions strategies for all middle school students and is developing the implementation of coordinated and directive interventions for the high school, students have increasing opportunities to learn and grow.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school consistently provides the community with appropriate and necessary information to assist families, especially those most in need. Prior to students entering Parish Hill Middle High School (PHMHS), parent/guardians are invited to attend seventh grade parent night, which is held in the spring for incoming seventh grade students. This is an informational meeting that educates parents/guardians about all services offered. Information regarding the school is also sent home with sixth graders during transition activities that are held by the grades 7-10 counselor and school social worker at Chaplin, Hampton, and Scotland Elementary Schools. During the summer, an information packet is sent home to all parents. The packet contains a parent handbook, free and reduced lunch applications, and health forms. Parents are asked to send back a signed form stating that they received the handbook. At the beginning of each school year, all students receive a student handbook, which outlines all available services. The handbook is also offered digitally on the website. The principal produces a weekly newsletter that may include information from anyone. Health services reaches out through the newsletter to provide information on topics such as the annual flu clinic and availability of mental health services through a state grant. Access to Medical Home Model, a state service, is by referral. The Endicott survey indicates that 77.7 percent of students who responded know who to go to if they have a problem. The social worker/director of special education reaches out to hard-to-reach families and does home visits when she cannot get in touch with parents of students in need of extra support. Of parents who responded to the Endicott survey, 74.7 percent believe that all families are informed of how to access support services. Because the school provides information to families, including to those most in need, about available student support services, there are many opportunities for parents to stay informed of available services and to access and implement them for their families.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- parents
- department leaders
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website

Standard 6 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student. A variety of technological resources exists to assist student support services professional staff in providing comprehensive school counseling, special education, and health services to the school community. Technological resources are limited in some areas such as Chromebook availability, and 2.0 web tools. PowerSchool is used to create and track student schedules, maintain grades, produce transcripts, and to record and track attendance and discipline. The nurse uses PowerSchool as a medical records management tool. A scope and sequence is being developed and implemented this year, which includes learning style inventories, career cluster surveys, aptitude surveys, career interest inventories, resume writing, and college and scholarship searches. The special education department uses IEP Direct to generate Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Technology is available for student support and includes iPads, SMART Boards, Chromebooks, frequency modulation (FM) units for hearing impaired students and pass-around microphones for classmates, Dragon Naturally Speaking Talk to Text, Don Johnston Co-Writer Universal, Story Creator, Google Apps for Education, Lexia, and Raz-kids. The library media center has its physical catalog of holdings on Follett Destiny, an online system accessible to any student with Internet access. There is a variety of databases for research and Encyclopedia Britannica on the school's website. Additionally, there are links to EasyBib and TurnItIn and Infobase Video on Demand online video-streaming service. The school counselors use PowerSchool, Blackboard Connect, Naviance, a monthly newsletter, and the school website to publicize services and communicate with the school community. Because support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services, students have the opportunity to grow and learn individually and collaboratively.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- school support staff
- school website

Standard 6 Indicator 4

Conclusions

School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who deliver a written, developmental program; consistently meet with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling; frequently engage in individual and group meetings with all students; regularly deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers; and use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. The school employs three school counselors and has favorable student-to-school counselor ratios, and one school counselor holds a national certification in counseling. The school counseling office has an adequate number of support staff employed to assist the counselors in providing services to the school community. The school counselors have a written developmental curriculum for students in grades 7-12. The school counseling curriculum addresses the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) three domains of academic, social/personal, and college and career readiness. School counselors provide an age-appropriate, developmental school counseling program to meet the needs of the students through individual and group counseling opportunities that meet the expectations of the ASCA. The school counselors meet with students in both individual and group settings to address the academic, social/personal, and college and career readiness needs of the students. Students report that school counselors are available and willing to meet with them on demand or by appointment. School counselors also schedule meetings with students throughout the year. The school counselors have numerous groups that meet throughout the year in addition to a minimum of one or two individual meetings per year. However, school counselors are in need of a scheduling and documenting mechanism to ensure that all students receive appropriate services. The school counselors and social worker have established positive relationships with local mental health agencies in the Tri-Town communities. The school counselors have conducted a thorough needs assessment of students, faculty, and parents to determine the efficacy of their program and to consider what improvements and changes need to be made in the school counseling office and school counseling curriculum. There are exit surveys for juniors and seniors establishing data to inform future decision making by the department. Because school counseling services have a sufficient number of certified, licensed personnel who meet on a regular basis with students, provide a written, comprehensive, developmental program, engage in individual and group meetings with students, provide appropriate services for all learners through data-driven decision making that are connected with 21st century learning expectations, and deliver collaborative outreach and referrals to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers, all students have opportunities to be successful learners.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- students
- school support staff
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 5

Conclusions

The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who provide preventative health services and direct intervention services; use an appropriate referral process; conduct ongoing student health assessments; and use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. The school has a full-time nurse who is an integral part of the school and works with and uses resources of the counseling suite. The school's health services provide adequate level of supports for the school community and is an integral part of the school's student support services. The school nurse provides both direct intervention services for all students including emergency response services, injury assessment, pain management, evaluation of illness, and medication administration. The nurse provides vision screening to ninth grade students, hearing screening to eighth grade students, and annual scoliosis screenings for seventh to ninth grade students. Additionally, the nurse is a guest speaker in health classes and educates individuals and groups of students on health issues and topics when appropriate. The student/parent handbook provides information to parents regarding health services, including health assessments. Incoming seventh grade parents receive information about health services and appropriate documentation in May, prior to their enrollment. The nurse also uses the weekly news bulletin as a way to inform parents of pertinent information, for example, reminding parents of the necessary health forms for sports participation. The nurse refers students and parents to appropriate outside agencies when necessary including ProHealth Physicians and CVS Minute Clinic. The nurse also provides internal referrals at the school when necessary and appropriate to Section 504, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and related services. The nurse is included in the student services' needs assessment survey distributed to students, staff, and parents. Student services staff, including the nurse, review the results and assess the data with a focus on improving services to ensure that each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. Because the school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who provide preventative health services and direct intervention services; use an appropriate referral process; conduct ongoing student health assessments; and use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations, the student population is provided with the tools and opportunities to grow in good health and develop healthy lifestyles.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- school support staff
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 6

Conclusions

Library media services has certified/licensed personnel and support staff who are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum and provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum. Library media services are partially integrated into the curriculum and instructional practices. However, the full-time licensed staff position was reduced, limiting the facility availability for students and teachers before, during, and after school. The LMS is responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning, but does not yet conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data including feedback from the school community to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. The school recently reduced the position of library media specialist to from 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) to a .6 FTE to service its 240 students. A library paraprofessional covers the circulation desk during the LMS's planning period and half-hour lunch break. Consequently, the library media center is open from 7:40 a.m. to 2:55 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. To address the .4 FTE reduction, administrators are exploring opportunities to provide staff coverage to address accessibility issues. The library media center (LMC) is also available for teachers to take classes for research Monday through Friday. The LMS is a member of the English department but does not attend monthly department meetings because her hours were reduced. The LMS does not participate in development of curriculum, but works as requested with teachers who bring research projects to her. She works closely with transitioning seventh graders in introducing them to the LMC and its resources and to reinforce instruction on citation, meeting with them weekly for eight weeks during double blocks. She also works closely with seniors on their Capstone projects. Of students responding to the Endicott survey, 76 percent agree that, "The library has the resources I need," and 85.2 percent agree that, "The library provides me with a wide range of materials, technology, and other information services." Of responding staff, 92.1 percent agree that library staff provide a wide range of print and non-print materials, including technologies and other information services, that fully support the curriculum. The LMS made decisions about cutting subscription costs for databases, while maintaining an adequate collection of online resources. Although the Endicott survey indicates that 67.2 percent of responding students agree that the LMC was accessible before, during, and after school hours, the reduction of the library media specialist position and corresponding reduction in the times the library is open occurred after the survey was administered. The LMC provides a wide range of materials and technologies which support the curriculum. There are nine computers in the library, twenty-four in the library computer lab, and WiFi is also available. The library holdings include 13,000 titles and a small DVD collection. Of students who responded to the Endicott survey, 68.1 percent agree that the library staff is willing to help them find information they need or want. Library statistics regarding individual student use of the library show an increase of 81 percent from the 2013-2014 school year to the 2014-2015 school year. The LMC contains books of various reading levels to meet a wide variety of student needs. New materials are purchased to support changes in the curriculum and include adolescent literature. A student attempting to do research on a Chromebook in a science classroom, when directed to the library website in order to use a database, said he could not proceed because he did not have the password to any of the subscription sites. This scenario was repeated several times. The database passwords are available, but username and password information are different for every resource, so if students (or staff) do not have the database passwords sheet on hand or committed to memory, the six databases are inaccessible to them at that time. In a class working on a research paper several days after the class went to the library, only one student was using a book from the LMC, which she left class to find with help from the LMS. Students successfully accessed the library to iConn, the Connecticut State Library site, which requires no password. The LMC does not yet have a system in place to use ongoing data and feedback from the school community to improve services and assess program effectiveness, other than circulation reports from Destiny and the Endicott survey. Library media services provides a variety of resources and technologies to the learning community and supports curriculum and responds to students interests and needs; however, adequate staff who can assist with integration of library media services into curriculum, ensure that the facility is available and staffed for teachers

and students before, during and after school, can further respond to students' interests and needs through database accessibility in order to fully support independent learning, and conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations will further integrate services into the curriculum, increase availability to resources, and support student engagement and achievement.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website

Standard 6 Indicator 7

Conclusions

There are an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide support services for students including special education, Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and English language learners (ELL) who collaborate with teachers, counselors, targeted services and other support staff to achieve 21st century learning expectations; provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students; and perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. There are five full-time licensed and certified special education teachers, a clinical school counselor who works with identified students, a part-time speech and language therapist, ten full-time paraprofessionals and one part-time paraprofessional. Occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT) services, and school psychologists who complete testing are contracted out of district. Students with Section 504 Plans are serviced by the school counselors, nurse, and other school personnel as necessary. One reading teacher is also the ELL teacher. Special education teachers, acting as case managers, provide information to regular education teachers at the start of school regarding accommodations and modifications for their shared students. Special education case managers consult and collaborate with general education teachers about individual students and their progress toward the general education curriculum. Differentiated instruction by regular education teachers is inconsistent, but special educators adapt and modify work for students as needed. There is a wide range of classes and instructional models based on student need. Almost all special education students are placed in inclusion or general education classes, with resource classes available to appropriately support and serve students' needs. The special educators and related service personnel are dedicated to using many forms of assessment to guide their instruction and to identify student need and student success. Special educators conduct data collection and progress monitoring for students with IEPs. Assessment tools, including the Woodcock Johnson III, Test of Written Language (TOWL), Gray Oral Reading (GORT IV), and Wechsler Individual Achievement (WIAT), are used to establish eligibility and to monitor progress. Behavior rating scales used include the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale and the Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC). Parish Hill Middle High School contracts the services of local professionals for students requiring cognitive assessments and certain other specialized assessments. Students eligible for the Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA) program are assessed using that model. In conjunction with other departments, the special education department has used parent/guardian surveys to inform decision making in regards to possible changes to programs and practices. Because there is an adequate number of personnel and support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and ELL learners, who collaborate with teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff, provide inclusive learning opportunities for students, and use relevant and ongoing data, all students are in a position to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website

Standard 6 Commendations

Commendation

The vast array of supports available to students, families, and the school community through student services

Commendation

The use of many supports for identified students and the use of the inclusion model for special education students to ensure access to the curriculum

Commendation

The provision of consistent, appropriate, and necessary information to assist families, especially those most in need, about support services

Commendation

The transition program coordinated between the elementary schools' and PHMHS's counselors to provide information to families

Commendation

The use of technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated support services

Commendation

The use of Naviance to assist with college and career readiness and the provision of a wide range of services by the counselors

Commendation

The implementation of a student support services needs assessment that successfully surveyed students, parents, and faculty in order to better serve the school community and to improve programs and services

Commendation

The conscientious use of health care professional development and student health data to inform practice and decision making

Commendation

The innovative allocation of limited funds to provide comprehensive, varied, relevant and up-to-date resources in the library media center

Standard 6 Recommendations

Recommendation

Design and implement timely, coordinated, and directive intervention services consistently at all grade levels

Recommendation

Ensure that the library media center is available and staffed for teachers and students before, during, and after school, can further respond to students' interests and needs through database accessibility in order to fully support independent learning, and conducts ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations to further integrate services into the curriculum, increase availability to resources, and support student engagement and achievement

Standard 7 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The Parish Hill Middle High School community and board of education provide dependable but minimal funding for a wide range of school programs and services, sufficient professional and support staff, ongoing professional development and curriculum revision, a full range of technological support, sufficient equipment, and instructional materials and supplies. The district's governing body, the board of education, approved a budget of \$6,397,047 for the 2015-2016 school year. This was an increase of .96 percent over the previous year's budget amount, in comparison to the average budget increase for the state of Connecticut for 2015-2016, which was approximately three percent. For the 2016-2017 year, the superintendent recommended a budget with an increase of .83 percent over 2015-2016. This budget was rejected by the board of education. The approved budget for the 2016-2017 year had a zero percent increase. The school utilizes grant funding and parent support to supplement the budget to provide additional supports to benefit students. For example, the culinary arts teacher wrote a grant to obtain stainless steel tables for the culinary room. Perkins Grant money was used to purchase a Hobart industry quality dishwasher, a True refrigerator, and a Moffat proofer for the culinary program. Perkins funds were also used to purchase a color printer for the business department and a StopSaw, a safety equipped table saw. Parish Hill Middle High School offers eight Advanced Placement (AP) courses: Calculus, English Literature, English Language, United States (US) History, Biology, Statistics, Studio Art, and Spanish 5. The district provides full funding for students to take the AP exams. For the 2015-2016 year, 54 exams, at a cost of \$3,667, were administered. Parish Hill Middle High School also offers a variety of elective and enhancement courses that seek to meet the unique needs of students such as Culinary I and II, Three Dimensional Art/Pottery, Music Technology/Composition, Computer-Aided Drafting, Gaming Design, Video Production, Human Communications. Additionally, students are able to enter support classes in math and language arts as needed. Parish Hill Middle High School (PHMHS) has a total enrollment of 246 students. There are a total of 27 content teachers, which equates to an overall 9.6 to 1 student-to-teacher ratio. There are five special education teachers, each with a caseload of 10 to 12 students. The school's two-year targeted plan calls for a position for curriculum coordination. There is a desire to review the feasibility of hiring a 0.1-0.2 full-time equivalent (FTE) curriculum coordinator to address curricular updates, revisions, and pacing needs, and to provide support for interdisciplinary learning and lesson planning. Adequate funds are available to support teacher professional development. Teachers have been able to attend professional development opportunities upon request if the opportunity pertains to achieving school goals. In the last budget cycle, \$4,500 was budgeted for curriculum. This was subsequently cut to \$1,500, but with grant funding the amount was restored back to the original \$4,500. Teachers, upon approval of the principal, are paid to write and/or revise curriculum. Parish Hill Middle High School currently utilizes a variety of technological tools that support 21st century learning skills. Many classrooms have an interactive whiteboard. Training for the use of the SMART Boards was made available to teachers on multiple occasions. Four carts of Chromebook computers are also available for student and faculty use, which total approximately 85 computers. Two Windows-based computer labs and one computer-aided design (CAD) lab are also a resource. Additionally, language teachers have a classroom set of Chromebook computers to access the Middlebury World Language online program. The science laboratories are reasonably equipped with data collection probes. Department key teachers are provided with adequate annual budgets that allow for the purchase of instructional materials and supplies. While the Parish Hill Middle High School community and board of education provide dependable, but minimal funding for a wide range of school programs and services, sufficient professional and support staff, ongoing professional development and curriculum revision, a full range of technology support, sufficient equipment, and sufficient instructional materials and supplies, fully funding the needs of the school will support teaching, learning, and student achievement.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- teachers
- Endicott survey

Standard 7 Indicator 2

Conclusions

Parish Hill Middle High School (PHMHS) develops and plans, but minimally funds, programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment and to keep the school clean on a daily basis. Parish Hill Middle High School staff and faculty utilize an electronic help desk system, through which they can send help tickets to the technology support person(s) when help is needed to repair or replace any technology equipment throughout the building. Staff and faculty also routinely use email to contact the director of maintenance when repairs or replacements are needed for other types of equipment. The Endicott survey data indicate 44.6 percent of staff agrees that needed repairs are completed in a timely manner, and 26.3 percent of the staff agrees that the school is clean and well-maintained. Additionally, 34.1 percent of students agree that furniture and equipment in their classrooms are in good condition. The school employs four custodians, including the director of maintenance. Two work during the school day to clean, maintain, and/or repair anything that might occur while students and teachers are in the building. Two work after school hours to clean the building after the school day, and refresh the building for the following day. Room cleanliness often varies throughout the school. The Endicott survey indicated a general lack of cleanliness, but since the study, significant positive changes have been made in this area. The custodians also prepare the cafeteria, auditorium, or gymnasium for special events that are held by school staff. When necessary, faculty members fill out a building use form to use various areas of the school and provide the date of the event, location of the event, the need of equipment or furniture, and/or set-up needs for the event. The building use form is given to the appropriate custodial staff, who will then arrange for the appropriate equipment and manpower needed to hold the event. The custodian job description itemizes the tasks that are to be performed daily, biweekly, weekly, monthly, quarterly, biannually, and once per year. At least annually, all equipment goes through a thorough inspection for maintenance needs. All air conditioning units and heaters have filters changed and are inspected to ensure that they are in working order. Each summer, the boiler goes through a complete inspection, tune-up, and cleaning. The school's emergency generator is also given the same inspection and clean up during the summer. Parish Hill Middle High School has a large storage outbuilding available behind the school that houses large equipment, such as lawn mowers, an all-terrain vehicle, and snowblowers. There is also a basement and garage area that the custodial staff utilizes to safely house maintenance supplies and equipment. Many items are maintained or repaired in house. When a specific machine or device requires a service technician, an outside vendor is utilized. As Parish Hill Middle High School develops, plans, and fully funds programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant, to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment, and to keep the school clean on a daily basis, teaching and learning will be enhanced by a comfortable physical environment.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- parents
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 7 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The community minimally funds and the school sometimes implements a long-range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements. The community minimally funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements. Parish Hill Middle High School has a long-term Capital Improvement Plan and a Technology Improvement Plan valid through the summer of 2015. The annual budget is created with staffing needs based upon enrollment numbers. The superintendent develops, in concert with the director of maintenance and administration, a long-range Capital Improvement Plan for the years 2013-2019 based on annual assessments of the facility. The plan is presented to the board of education during budget time for the present and following fiscal years. The board then votes on approval of the plan. The plan has both large and small capital improvement items and these are prioritized based on needs and available resources, primarily money and staffing. The board recently included a separate operating budget line item for capital improvement. Parish Hill Middle High School also has a capital, nonrecurring fund, which is a limited amount of money which becomes available in the scenario of a budget surplus. State statute allows the school to roll over a maximum of one percent of an unfunded balance surplus, which amounts to about \$63,000. The Capital Improvement Plan funds have been used for a wide variety of projects. This includes the purchase and installation of SMART Boards in almost every classroom; the creation and upgrade of many classrooms and offices, such as the Adapted Living resource room and science labs; the upgrade and expansion of the chorus room; painting some classrooms and hallways; installing new ceilings in some classrooms and hallways; installing the new gymnasium floor; installing new lockers in the middle school hallways; refurbishing the well station; new servers for the computers; and new vinyl composition tile (VCT) flooring in the cafeteria. In 2012, a school committee established a three-year technology plan that addressed technology integration into the curriculum, equitable use of technology, infrastructure, and administrative needs. This plan was followed with fidelity and substantial changes were realized. Recently, there have been informal discussions about technology plans for the future, but there is no formal long-term plan in place. The Endicott survey results indicate that 75.2 percent of students agree that computers are available for them before, during, and after school hours. Part of the school's two-year targeted plan calls for proper maintenance and repair of building and physical plant. This plan calls for interior painting, the repair of the front facade, replacement of old ceiling tiles, replacement of old lighting with high efficiency fixtures, the repair of window frames, replacement of worn floor tiles, installation of a new main entry away from cafeteria, heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) updates by replacing thermostats, valves, and motor switches, and replacement of the loading dock platform. The replacement of old lighting with high efficiency fixtures has begun. The long-term maintenance plan includes replacement of boiler components with high efficiency parts and fittings, replacement of portions of the roof, HVAC upgrades, replacement of four sets of building entry doorways, replacement of the boiler and chimney breeches, and systematic replacement of fire detection sensors. It is noteworthy that the boilers were built in 1962 and are the original and only heat/hot water source for the school. Over the last decade, significant community discord regarding the budget demands to run Parish Hill Middle High School combined with a drop in enrollment has spurred public concern about the possibility of school closure. As a result, this ongoing community discussion has limited the school's ability to address the budgetary needs. When the community fully funds, and the school can fully implement a long-range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements, the educational needs of each student can be fully supported.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 7 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Parish Hill Middle High School faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget. Parish Hill Middle High School utilizes the key teachers as leaders and representatives of each department. There is one key teacher per department. Key teachers are responsible for creating and implementing an annual budget for their department and evaluating and revising course offerings. Teacher budget requests are collected by key teachers and they prioritize the requests. These budgets are made in conjunction with the principal, and are modified by the superintendent. In January, the superintendent discusses the proposed budget with the board of education. The board finalizes the budget by March in preparation for a May Tri-Town vote for budget approval. Faculty and administrators are involved in the development and implementation of the school budget, therefore, they feel empowered to make responsible decisions about how monies are prioritized for the benefit of students.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership

Standard 7 Indicator 5

Conclusions

The Parish Hill Middle High School site and plant somewhat supports the delivery of high quality school programs and services. Parish Hill Middle High School is a single-level school building, with designated middle and high school classroom areas. Generally, the middle school course offerings are kept to one area of the building, while high school courses are kept to another. This arrangement supports age-appropriate interactions and close placement of middle school team teachers. Student support services are centrally located for students who need to visit the nurse or school counselors. The information technologies department is located next to the library, which allows for close communication between the library media specialist and the technology support person. Parish Hill Middle High School recently updated the secretary's office to be near the entrance of the building in order to accommodate parents and community members upon entering the school. The gymnasium is located at the end of the building, adjacent to athletic fields. There is also a new fitness center next to the gym, which houses a variety of cardio and weight equipment. Students, staff, and community are encouraged to use this facility before, during, and after school hours. A number of worthwhile school and community activities occur at the school. Opposite the gymnasium is the auditorium, choral room, band room, and culinary department. The culinary classroom has recently been updated to include restaurant quality equipment. Many of the improvements have been due to equipment obtained through grants written by the technology education and culinary teachers. Recent equipment purchases include restaurant quality Hobart dishwasher, a TRUE refrigerator, a Moffat proofer, and stainless steel tables. Other grant purchases include a three-dimensional printer for technology education, a color printer for business education, a StopSaw for wood shop, and computers for student use. In the basement of the building, there is an expansive wood shop and a computer-aided design (CAD) lab to fully support students' achievement of the 21st century learning expectations. Parish Hill Middle High School also applied for the Public Educational and Governmental Programming and Education Technology Investment Account Grant Program. School personnel worked closely with the local cable provider in order to upgrade the video production studio from analog systems to digital technology, which resulted in having industry-standard equipment and editing capabilities. There are three computer labs and four computer carts for classroom use. All computer labs are equipped with printers. Endicott survey data indicate that 65 percent of students agree that the facility adequately supports its programs and services while only 40 percent of teachers agree that the facility adequately supports its programs and services. When the school site and plant fully support the delivery of high quality school programs and services, students experience success in meeting the school's learning expectations and achieve personal success.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- Endicott survey

Standard 7 Indicator 6

Conclusions

The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations. Parish Hill Middle High School documents the safety and security plan in the formal All Hazards School Security and Safety Plan. Many of the plant facilities are inspected and serviced by outside vendors. For example, Aqua Pumps routinely tests and monitors the school's wells to keep in compliance with the State Department of Health. Similarly, there are vendors contracted for boiler service, generator backup system, the alarm systems, and fire extinguisher compliance. The boiler is inspected and has passed safety tests by the state of Connecticut. The cafeteria has an up-to-date food service license issued through the Eastern Highlands Health District. The latest inspection reports, conducted by the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health, are posted in the kitchen. The food services personnel are in charge of maintaining the Connecticut State Board of Education Administrative Review of the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. The school kitchen has maintained scores of 95 and above for inspections conducted by the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health. In addition, substantial upgrades in safety and security in the building have recently been completed. Additional cameras were added to total 11 cameras that have been installed in critical locations to increase the ability of administrators to monitor events and traffic flow. Entryways are secure and staff must use a key fob to gain entry from most doors. A new visitor entry has been created with a holding area whereby visitors pass through two checkpoints. Because the school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations students and staff, are assured of working and studying in a safe and secure facility.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- central office personnel
- school support staff

Standard 7 Indicator 7

Conclusions

All professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school. In recent years, efforts have been made to expand upon parent and community communications. The school utilizes BlackBoard Connect, which is a system that allows for the universal transmission of emails, text alerts, and phone calls to all participating parents and community members. BlackBoard Connect is used to disperse messages for information such as school events, athletic events, weather-related delays, schedule changes, and more. The staff and faculty utilizes the PowerSchool program to convey information to families and students regarding grades, attendance, lunch, and nurse visits. Parish Hill Middle High School employs a school-wide standard of inputting grades into the system at a minimum interval of every two weeks. However, most faculty input information more frequently than requested. Parish Hill Middle High School also employs a policy in which teachers are to call or email home when students receive a D or an F on an interim or quarterly report card. Additionally, the 2015-2016 district goal is to improve and expand parental and community communication and involvement. This goal is very similar to the 2014-2015 district goal. The administration has made a concerted effort to improve communications with less connected parents and community members. Student services sends out a weekly "Happenings on the Hill" newsletter via email, which provides families and community members with information about topics such as upcoming events, reminders, and successes. The seventh and eighth grade teams also post webpages, using the school's website, to convey information regarding middle school topics and events. The board of education also publishes and distributes informational newsletters. There is a recently re-established parent-teacher organization (PTO) that meets monthly. Parents have supported the school by providing manpower to beautify the school grounds with flowers and shrubs. Parents also worked collaboratively with school maintenance staff to paint some interior spaces and classrooms. Sixty-six percent of parents responded positively to the Endicott survey prompt that the professional staff actively engages my family as partners in my son's/daughter's education. Because the professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reaches out to those families who have been less connected to the school, students are more likely to succeed and achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- parents
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 7 Indicator 8

Conclusions

Parish Hill Middle High School develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning. The school is engaged in a number of partnerships that support student learning and achievement of the 21st century learning expectations. The school hosts involvement-based activities such as open house, parent-teacher conferences, food drives, the Capstone Fair, concerts, and athletic events in order to help establish a link among students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members. According to the Endicott survey, 87.8 percent of students agree that their parents have the opportunity to meet teachers, building administrators, and school counselors. Parish Hill Middle High School hosts an annual event called Empty Bowls, in which the school collaborates to make pottery bowls in the art room. These bowls are later used during an evening event in which school staff and members of the community come together to enjoy homemade soups. The money collected is donated to the local Covenant Soup Kitchen. The school social worker runs a Helping Hands program, which provides monetary support for students and their families in times of need. Eighth grade students can also participate in a Youth Health Service Corp., which is a rotation facilitated by Eastern Connecticut State University. Community members are also invited to attend the Capstone Fair, which is an evening event that showcases the research papers and projects completed by each senior as a part of their graduation requirements. Many of these community members are the expert sources for the students; the expert sources act as mentors for seniors as they develop and ultimately present their senior Capstone project. Additionally, many alumni attend this function, further demonstrating a strong community connection to the school. The school also bi-annually hosts a career day event, through which about 30 parents, community members, and local business leaders are invited to share their expertise with students. This is held as a whole-school event. During the 2015-2016 school year, the principal began formulating a parent advisory council (PAC). This council will be modeled after PACs that have been successful in other surrounding small towns. The school also consistently participates in a number of higher education partnerships. The school has a partnership with the Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC) that allows any junior or senior with a 2.7 grade point average (GPA) and above to take a free college course for credit. The QVCC College Connections program allows students to earn college credit through certain high school courses, such as Human Communications, Chemistry, Algebra 2, Computer-Aided Design, and Accounting 2. The Eastern Connecticut State University's Windham High Incentive Program (WHIP) allows any junior or senior in the top 30 percent of the class to take a free college credit course. The University of Connecticut (UConn) also has an Early College Experience (ECE) which offers concurrent enrollment through which students can earn both high school and college credit for each UConn course taken at PHMHS. One ECE course, Spanish, is taught at PHMHS. The school develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships students that incorporate authentic and rigorous learning opportunities to support student learning and the achievement of the school's stated learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- parents
- community members
- Endicott survey

Standard 7 Commendations

Commendation

The substantial efforts of some teachers to seek additional funding through grants to supplement the school budget

Commendation

The long-term Capital Improvement Plan that identifies items to be addressed and the associated anticipated costs

Commendation

The completion of the 2012-2015 Educational Technology Plan to ensure needs are identified

Commendation

The structure that is in place to have faculty involvement in the budget process

Commendation

The efforts to increase student exposure to technology used for instructional purposes

Commendation

The recently upgraded safety features and secure front entryway

Commendation

The concerted effort by staff to improve communications with less connected parents and community members

Commendation

The participation of students, staff, and community to support the Empty Bowl event, which, in turn supports the community-at-large

Commendation

The participation of all seniors in a Capstone project that combines the involvement of community mentors in

supporting this initiative

Commendation

The efforts of the school's kitchen staff to maintain health and safety standards established by the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health

Standard 7 Recommendations

Recommendation

Provide adequate, dependable funding for a wide range of school programs and services, sufficient professional and support staff, ongoing professional development and curriculum revision, a full range of technology support, sufficient equipment, and sufficient instructional materials and supplies to support teaching, learning, and student achievement

Recommendation

Ensure the school can fully implement the long-range plan to address programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements, so that the educational needs of each student can be fully supported

Recommendation

Ensure the school site and plant fully support the delivery of high quality school programs and services so that students experience success in meeting the school's learning expectations and achieve personal success

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

This comprehensive evaluation report reflects the findings of the school's self-study and those of the visiting committee. It provides a blueprint for the faculty, administration, and other officials to use to improve the quality of programs and services for the students in this school. The faculty, school board, and superintendent should be apprised by the building administration yearly of progress made addressing visiting committee recommendations.

Since it is in the best interest of the students that the citizens of the district become aware of the strengths and limitations of the school and suggested recommendations for improvement, the Commission requires that the evaluation report be made public in accordance with the Commission's Policy on Distribution, Use, and Scope of the Visiting Committee Report.

A school's initial/continued accreditation is based on satisfactory progress implementing valid recommendations of the visiting committee and others identified by the Commission as it monitors the school's progress and changes which occur at the school throughout the decennial cycle. To monitor the school's progress in the Follow-Up Program, the Commission requires that the principal submit routine Two- and Five-Year Progress Reports documenting the current status of all evaluation report recommendations, with particular detail provided for any recommendation which may have been rejected or those items on which no action has been taken. In addition, responses must be detailed on all recommendations highlighted by the Commission in its notification letters to the school. School officials are expected to have completed or be in the final stages of completion of all valid visiting committee recommendations by the time the Five-Year Progress Report is submitted. The Commission may request additional Special Progress Reports if one or more of the Standards are not being met in a satisfactory manner or if additional information is needed on matters relating to evaluation report recommendations or substantive changes in the school.

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Commission has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Commission within sixty days (60) of occurrence any substantive change which negatively impacts the school's adherence to the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The report of substantive change must describe the change itself and detail any impact which the change has had on the school's ability to meet the Standards for Accreditation. The Commission's Substantive Change Policy is included on the next page. All other substantive changes should be included in the Two- and Five-Year Progress Reports and/or the Annual Report which is required of each member school to ensure that the Commission office has current statistical data on the school.

The Commission urges school officials to establish a formal follow-up program at once to review and implement all findings of the self-study and valid recommendations identified in the evaluation report. An outline of the Follow-Up Program is available in the Commission's Accreditation Handbook, which was given to the school at the onset of the self-study. Additional direction regarding suggested procedures and reporting requirements is provided at Follow-Up Seminars offered by Commission staff following the on-site visit.

The visiting committee would like to express thanks to the community for the hospitality and welcome. The school community completed an exemplary self-study that clearly identified the school's strengths and areas of need. The time and effort dedicated to the self-study and preparation for the visit ensured a successful accreditation visit.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES Commission on Public Secondary Schools

Principals of member schools must report to the Commission within sixty (60) days of occurrence any substantive change in the school which has a negative impact on the school's ability to meet any of the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The report of a substantive change must describe the change itself as well as detail the impact on the school's ability to meet the Standards. The following are potential areas where there might be negative substantive changes which must be reported:

- elimination of fine arts, practical arts, and student activities
- diminished upkeep and maintenance of facilities
- significantly decreased funding - cuts in the level of administrative and supervisory staffing
- cuts in the number of teachers and/or guidance counselors
- grade level responsibilities of the principal
- cuts in the number of support staff
- decreases in student services
- cuts in the educational media staffing
- increases in student enrollment that cannot be accommodated
- takeover by the state
- inordinate user fees
- changes in the student population that warrant program or staffing modification(s) that cannot be accommodated, e.g., the number of special needs students or vocational students or students with limited English proficiency

Roster of Team Members

Chair(s)

Chair: Dr. Gary Maestas - Plymouth Public Schools

Assistant Chair: Michele Saulis - Connecticut River Academy

Team Members

Deborah Brown - East Lyme High School

Vance Cannon - Housatonic Valley Regional High School

David Dunn - East Hampton High School

Lori Dunn - Sharon High School

Kara Kingston - Griswold High School

Jose Martinez - Housatonic Valley Regional High School

William Pepin - North Smithfield High School

Sarah Smith - Edwin O. Smith High School

Susan Tarallo - Millbury Memorial Junior-Senior High School

Edward White - New Fairfield High School