

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE

SHELTON HIGH SCHOOL

SHELTON, CONNECTICUT

November 14-17, 2010

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STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

The Commission on Public Secondary Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges considers this visiting committee report of Shelton High School to be a privileged document submitted by the Commission 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 Shelton High 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 team.

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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 six Commissions: the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE), the Commission on Independent Schools (CIS), The Commission on Public Secondary Schools (CPSS), the Commission on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI), the Commission on Public Elementary and Middle Schools (CPEMS), and the Commission on American and International Schools Abroad (CAISA).

As the responsible body for matters of the evaluation and accreditation of public secondary school member institutions, CPSS requires visiting committees to assess the degree to which the

evaluated school meets the qualitative Standards for Accreditation of the Commission. Those Standards are:

Teaching and Learning Standards

Mission and Expectations for Student Learning

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of Student Learning

Support of Teaching and Learning Standards

Leadership and Organization

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning

The accreditation program for public schools involves a three-fold process: the self-study conducted by the local professional staff, the on-site evaluation conducted by the Commission's visiting committee, 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 committee and those identified by the Commission in the Follow-Up process. Continued accreditation requires that the school be re-evaluated at least once every ten years and that it show continued progress addressing identified needs.

Preparation for the Evaluation 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 Shelton High School, a committee that included the principal/principal's designee supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine

the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people. In addition to faculty members, the self-study committees included school administrators, students, parents, board of education and community members.

The self-study of Shelton High School extended over a period of sixteen (16) months from May 2009 to October 2010. The visiting committee was pleased to note that students and citizens joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

Public schools evaluated by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their adherence to the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the school's mission, 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 Commission, Shelton High School also used questionnaires developed by the Global Institute 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 Committee

A visiting committee of fifteen evaluators was assigned by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Shelton High School. The Committee members spent four days in Shelton, Connecticut, 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 meets the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented public high schools from three separate New England states and included teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, and a library/media specialist, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Shelton High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- over 37 hours shadowing 15 students for a half-day
- in addition to student shadowing, 10 hours of classroom observation
- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facility
- individual meetings with 30 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers
- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

Each conclusion on the report was agreed to by team consensus. Sources of evidence for each conclusion drawn by the visiting committee appear in parenthesis in the Standards sections of the report. The seven Standards for Accreditation reports include commendations and recommendations that, in the team's judgment, will be helpful to the school as it works to improve teaching and learning and to better meet Commission Standards.

The report of the findings of the visiting committee will be forwarded to the Commission on Public Secondary Schools which will make a decision on the accreditation of Shelton High School.

Overview of Findings

Although the conclusions of the visiting committee on the school's adherence to the Commission's Standards for Accreditation appear in various sections of this report, the committee wishes to highlight some findings in the paragraphs that follow. These findings are not intended to be a summary of the report.

TEACHING AND LEARNING AT SHELTON HIGH SCHOOL

Shelton High School is a supportive and collaborative learning community that is mission-driven, committed to improvement, and on the verge of significant progress in student achievement. The faculty, staff, and administration are working together in earnest to provide Shelton students the opportunities and supports needed to acquire and demonstrate the skills needed for success in an ever-changing world. The school community has joined together in recent years to overcome a series of disheartening setbacks including budget uncertainty and reductions, a significant fire, and leadership turnover. Yet, Shelton High School is a highly-organized, welcoming, and spirited learning environment that is committed to helping students meet high academic and behavioral standards while developing to their full potential.

The Shelton High School Mission Statement is the product of an inclusive and thorough process that accurately depicts the community's core beliefs about learning. Prominently displayed about the school and included in every publication, the mission and expectations for student learning stresses respect, collaboration, life-long learning, and responsible leadership. The atmosphere in the school that has been created by teachers, students, administrators, and staff members consistently reflects Shelton's core values.

Students at Shelton High School benefit from a curriculum that offers a rich array of learning opportunities in core academic courses as well as in the visual and performing arts, journalism, physical education, technical education, and modern languages, to name but a few. The expectations for what a graduate should know and be able to do are delineated in the school's academic expectations for learning. Teachers work earnestly and enthusiastically, yet independently and without collaboration, to prepare students to meet the expectations. However, the school lacks clear, written, and accessible curriculum documents that are aligned with the mission and expectations. Likewise, the curriculum must be accompanied by school-wide rubrics that will assist teachers in knowing when students are making progress toward the expectations.

Shelton High School teachers are committed, diligent, dedicated, and genuinely fond of their students. They pursue advanced degrees at an impressive rate, make themselves readily available to students, and go to great lengths to reach and motivate them. In turn, students are

aware that they benefit from a caring faculty. The mutual respect regularly displayed between teachers and students in the classroom provides a learning environment quite conducive to achievement of the mission. However, in order to maximize student achievement, there must be an organized, formal effort to become familiar with and employ instructional methods that engage students actively in their own learning. There is a clear need for teachers to integrate technology into instruction that will engage students in the same way as they interact with the world outside of school. Students with special needs will benefit from a greater commitment by the school to collaborative instruction that has content teachers and special educators working together to ensure all students have access to the curriculum and the support needed to achieve the learning expectations.

Student learning is assessed using a wide variety of instruments that require students to demonstrate what they know and are able to do. Teachers of common courses have worked collaboratively to develop common mid-term and final examinations. The data from the results of those exams will provide teachers with valuable feedback on student progress toward the school's academic expectations. The school is encouraged to continue efforts beyond examinations to develop common assessments aligned to learning expectations that are evaluated using school-wide rubrics. In order to insure reliability of the assessments, teachers must be afforded time not only to collaborate in the development of the instruments but also to look at student work in an effort to establish common standards for proficiency.

SUPPORT FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING AT SHELTON HIGH SCHOOL

The learning climate at Shelton High School is characterized by respect, pride, and a sense of belonging. Students are aware their teachers are dedicated to the profession and genuinely care for the young men and women in the school community. The school is fortunate to have a headmaster with a clear vision for the school who enjoys the respect of teachers, parents, staff members, and students. She is regarded as the educational leader in the building and as one who is familiar with the standards for accreditation and what is needed for the school to be fully aligned with them. The school's leadership team participates regularly in collaborative decision-making practices that give students, teachers, and parents a voice. However, the school needs sufficient autonomy for the headmaster and the necessary support from district administrators, to enable school leaders to achieve the recommendations made in this report.

The school is organized into a house system to create smaller learning communities to make the students' experience more personalized. Housemasters, guidance counselors, and clerks work within the house system to give students a sense of belonging. It is imperative that, while the houses operate independently, they remain constantly vigilant to maintaining equity and

consistency for all SHS students. Students are grouped into core courses in levels based on student ability and/or past performance. The school has taken steps in recent years to decrease the number of levels in order to insure access to the core curriculum and high standards for all students. This is a positive development that is sure to increase student achievement if implemented consistently and properly. Teachers require professional development in differentiating instruction in order to meet the needs of more diverse learners and to fulfill the school's purpose in this change.

Students at Shelton High School have a variety of needs that require proper supports in order to maximize learning and prepare students to be life-long learners and responsible citizens. While a number of the important supports are in place, recent budget cuts have limited the school's capacity for meeting the needs of all of its students. Guidance counselors, medical personnel, and clerks are consistently available to students, and they effectively communicate their services to students and families. The library/media center, while an open and attractive learning space, lacks sufficient staff members to make it fully effective and readily available to students. When the school can properly staff the center, the library/media specialist will play an integral part in moving the school forward in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and the infusion of technology to engage students.

The Shelton High School physical plant has ample room, meeting space, classrooms, locker rooms, labs, and shops to provide students with wonderful learning opportunities. The school and campus were recently upgraded through a major construction project and subsequent repairs made after a fire. These combine to create a versatile, vibrant, and exciting setting for learning. An increased effort is needed, however, in the day to day cleaning and maintenance of the facility.

If Shelton High School students are to be completely prepared to enter the world after high school, they must be provided the opportunity to develop marketable, essential 21st century skills. This cannot be achieved without the infusion and complete integration of technology into the curriculum, instructional practices, and assessment techniques. The school is in need of a greater commitment not only to technology hardware and software but to the staff necessary to maintain it and to assist teachers in their implementation of technology in the classroom.

Shelton High School has many of the structures in place to bring it to a level of greatness. A strong, visionary leader, a model of collaborative decision-making, a talented and dedicated staff, and a climate that is truly marked by mutual respect among all the stakeholders will serve the community well in its future endeavors. This report, complete with its commendations and recommendations, will serve as a blueprint not only toward complete alignment with NEASC standards but also toward educational excellence.

School and Community Profile

The City of Shelton is located on 31.4 square miles at the northeast edge of Fairfield County. Its population was 39,056 in 2007 and is projected to grow to 41,003 by 2013. Over the years, Shelton has changed from a promising manufacturing community on the banks of the Housatonic River to a prominent professional and high tech center along the Route 8 Corridor. As a result, the city boasts a broad range of socio-economic diversity. Housing needs are met through apartments, mobile homes, condominiums and single and multiple family dwellings located throughout the city; the median purchase price of a home is \$395,910. The median household income in Shelton is \$81,847. Shelton High School borders the downtown business district and a highly residential and suburban area. The school is within walking distance of the city's police station, senior citizens' center and ambulance corps. There is a 30,000 square foot Boys & Girls Club located a few miles from the school. In addition, there are 2 public libraries located approximately a mile away; a city hall, community center, U.S. Post Office, Shelton History Center and small businesses are within miles of the school.

The city's three major employers are Health Net, Pitney Bowes and BIC Corporation, which employ approximately 3,800 workers. Other major employers include Perkin Elmer, United Illuminating, Clayton Holdings Financial Mortgage, United Methodist Homes, Cable Vision Call Center and Walmart. As of October 1, 2008, Shelton's Grand List increased by \$108,176,690 over the prior year, an increase of 2.1%. An estimated 22,000 employees work in Shelton on a daily basis. Unemployment of city residents in 2007 was 4.6%, one third less than the state unemployment level of 6.6%.

In October 2008, total public school enrollment from the community reached 5,616 students. No unusual conditions affect enrollment stability. In 2006-2007, Shelton spent approximately \$10,818 per pupil, which is below the state average of \$12,151. Local resources funded 87.6% of the school budget. State resources averaged 9.7%, and federal resources were 2.6%. In the past two years, 69% of local property taxes have been allocated to schools.

With an enrollment of 1,659 students, Shelton High School is the largest public educational facility in the city, which includes six public and two parochial elementary schools and a public intermediate school. The city recently approved \$41.5 million in state funding for a 5/6 Upper Elementary School to be constructed at the former intermediate school; \$17.6 million of that amount will be in the form of state funding. Once completed, the elementary school located downtown will close. Shelton High School is located on a 50-acre site and shares its campus

with the intermediate school, which was completed in 2001. The four-story, 303,000 square-foot high school facility recently underwent a \$25,000,000 renovation. Some of the enhancements include improved climate control, wiring for technologies, more classroom space on the first floor, updated science classrooms/labs, replacement of lockers, new locker room facilities, a new weight room and renovations to the auditorium. A fire on December 30, 2008 caused extensive damage to two classrooms, the library/media center, and the maintenance area. Presently, demolition and reconstruction are ongoing, and it is expected that reconstruction will be completed in August 2009.

The high school's population is 85.8% Euro-American; the minority population is primarily of Hispanic (7%), Asian (4%) and African-American (2.8%) descent. English is the primary language of 91% of the students; the next three most prominent languages are Spanish (2.1%), Portuguese (2%) and Polish (1.3%). Other languages spoken include Korean, Urdu, Vietnamese, Hindi, Turkish, Mandarin and Chinese. ESOL students make up 0.7% of the student population. Approximately 5.9% to 9.8% of families in the school community have incomes at or below the poverty level. The families of 120 students receive food donations on a regular basis from Shelton High School's Food Bank coordinated by our school nurse. 12.4% of the SHS student body receives free or reduced lunch.

Of the school's professional staff, 78.4% hold advanced degrees. The 123-member faculty include 12 special education teachers, 10 department chairpersons and a full-time media specialist. Support staff is made up of 7 school counselors and a guidance department chairperson, 1.5 school psychologists, 1 instructional tutor, 1.4 speech pathologists, 1 interpreter for the deaf, 2 nurses, 2 social workers, 1 part-time substance abuse counselor, 5 security guards, 1 school resource officer and 14 paraprofessionals. There are 13 clerical staff employees as well as 11 full-time and 3 part-time custodians. In addition to contractual duties, teachers supervise co-curricular and class activities; teachers also are actively involved in areas ranging from staff development to curriculum revision and the Beginning Educators Support and Training program. Four teachers also serve in the capacity of computer champions and have been trained to provide support and encourage integration of technology within the building. Yearly, Shelton High School professional staff participates in 53 hours of professional development with 18 hours of professional development days, 9 hours of department meetings, 10 hours of faculty meetings and 16 hours of collaborative after-school work days. Teaching faculty have the opportunity to meet 1 to 2 Wednesdays per month for an hour after school to collaborate with other members of the teaching staff about instruction and co-curricular improvement.

Administration consists of 1 headmaster, 3 housemasters and an athletic director. The school is divided into 3 houses with an administrative housemaster and secretarial staff who work with approximately 554 students and 50 faculty and staff members. Each house office also has 2 school counselors who work with students from that particular house. An additional counselor and the guidance curriculum leader are located in the Career Center. The counselor to student ratio is 1:229. SHS also has a Student Assistance Team, comprised of counselors, school psychologist, social worker, nurse, substance abuse counselor, teachers and administrators, who provide a team approach to assess student concerns, connect the student with assistance and monitor the future progress of the student. Each student is assigned to a homeroom that remains the same throughout his/her career at Shelton High School. Each morning begins with a 5 minute homeroom period. Shelton High School's schedule is a 7 period modified rotation. Periods 1-4 are fixed, each 47 minutes in length. Periods 5-7 rotate, and those periods are either 67 or 39 minutes in length. The school has four 20 minute lunch waves. Individual teachers carry an average load of 100 students with an average class size of 18.5 students. Attendance rates for both teachers and students remain steady at Shelton High School with 93% of students and 91.3% of teachers present on a daily basis over the past 2 years. The student dropout rate for the past 2 years was 1.9%.

Students must complete a total of 23.3 credits for graduation, including 4 years of English, 3 years of social studies, mathematics and science, 2 years of physical education/health, 1 year of fine arts/career and technical education and a half year of computer literacy. Students must meet proficiency on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) math and reading or writing tests for a total of .2 credits toward graduation. Students must also complete a technology project to earn .1 credits toward graduation. In 2007-2008, 157 females and 145 males were enrolled in college level courses. In 2008-2009, 151 females and 134 males are enrolled in these courses.

The Shelton Board of Education recognizes the importance of an appropriate grouping system at Shelton High School, which allows all students to maximize their potential. Since most children fall within the average range of ability, the majority of students are placed in the college prep and academic studies levels. The honors level is smaller and offers a more rigorous curriculum. The general studies level is appropriate for those students requiring extra attention and a more individualized curriculum. A student may be in different levels depending on the course. For example, he/she may qualify for honors math and be in the college prep levels for the remaining courses. While students are grouped homogeneously in required academic areas, elective opportunities allow students of all ability levels to work cooperatively in classes such as creative writing, facing history and ourselves, creative advertising/desktop publishing, applied education, world language classes, computer classes, career and technical education, art and music classes.

Currently, 29% of the student body is enrolled in Advanced Placement or honors level English classes while 20% of the students are enrolled in advanced social studies courses. 22% of students take advanced science classes; 18% are enrolled in advanced math courses. The honors level is made up of approximately 29% of the student body while 40% of the school population is enrolled in college prep level courses. The academic and general studies levels are comprised of 25% and 7% of the student population respectively. Shelton High School will be eliminating a level by combining the college prep and academic levels during the 2010-2011 school year.

Special education services are provided to 7.2% of the student population. Courses are available for those students who, by Planning and Placement Team (PPT), are determined to be eligible for special services. The plan of instruction is designed to meet the student's needs according to his/her Individual Education Plan. This plan may include the collaborative classroom, the resource classroom, or the behavior management classroom. Shelton High School offers many courses in the collaborative setting. These classrooms have a special education teacher teamed with a content area teacher. Often the general education teacher delivers the instruction in the subject area. The special education teacher works with the students before, during and after instruction to give specially designed instruction, ensure understanding and provide adaptations and modifications.

Shelton High School provides a broad-based education for students in grades 9-12. In the Class of 2008, 62.6% of the graduates went on to further their education at a four year college or university; 26.1% enrolled in a two year or technical college; 2.2% enlisted in the military; 8.7% of the graduates entered the work force after graduation. Over 81% of the class of 2008, (338 of the 415 members), took the Scholastic Aptitude Test. Our average critical reading score was 495, comparable to the national average of 502. Shelton's mathematics mean score of 505 was slightly lower than the national average of 515. The class of 2008's writing score of 497 was above the average national writing score of 494. The state of Connecticut SAT averages for the class of 2008 in critical reading, mathematics, and writing were 509, 513, and 513 respectively. Shelton High had 2 students who were designated Commended National Merit Scholars, 1 of whom was a finalist. That same year, 202 students took 341 Advanced Placement exams in 1 or more of 13 subject areas; 49 students received the AP Scholar Award for receiving qualifying scores on 3 or more tests.

Other tests used by Shelton High School to determine academic performance standards and to allow comparison at the state and national level include the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT). In mid-October, the PSAT is administered to the entire sophomore class at no charge to the students to identify areas of

weakness and strength and to help students develop test-taking strategies. Juniors also may choose to pay the fee and take this exam. Students are required to perform at the proficient level of the CAPT writing and/or reading and math assessments as graduation requirements. An average of 92% of our students scored at or above proficiency level on all sections for the 2007-2008 school year. Each year, the freshman class takes a practice CAPT to develop test familiarity and to allow staff to track those students who need remediation prior to taking the test sophomore year. On the CT Technology Education Assessments, Shelton placed 25th out of 116 schools in the state and 7th out 22 schools in our District Reference Group (DRG).

Shelton High School collaborates with a variety of other educational programs to allow students to explore college level courses or courses not offered at the high school. The University of Connecticut Early College Experience provides academically motivated students an opportunity to earn college credits as well as an academic and financial head-start on a college degree. Students who participate in ECE are considered University of Connecticut non-degree students and earn course equivalent credits towards any college they attend. Courses include chemistry, two levels of economics, English, French and Spanish. Students can also enroll in the Career Pathways Program, which is a partnership with Housatonic Community College designed to provide students with an enhanced program of study to prepare them for careers in several fields. Shelton High School currently offers accounting, child development and marketing programs for college credit. Many Shelton High School students attend or are selected to participate in summer programs offered at local colleges and universities, like Yale's Summer Journalism Program.

Students are also encouraged to explore other educational opportunities offered in the school district locally and regionally. These include the Trumbull Regional Agriscience and Biotechnology Center, the Bridgeport Regional Aquaculture Science and Technology Education Center, the Educational Center for the Arts in New Haven and the Regional Center for the Arts in Trumbull. Students also attend regional vocational-technical schools, like Emmett O'Brien or Platt Tech. 14.3 % of high school-aged students in the district attend non-public schools. The Valley Regional Adult Education (VRAE) Program offers two high school completion programs. The VRAE also offers enrichment or online learning classes, an English as a Second Language Program, a Citizenship Program and a Family Learning Program. Shelton High School will offer Latin I to its students during the 2009-2010 school year as an online program utilizing Rosetta Stone and a language lab within an independent study setting.

The Career and Technical Education Program is designed to show students the connection between what they learn in the classroom and what will be expected of them in the world of

work. This path may lead the student to qualify for a Connecticut Career Certificate. Career Clusters offer a link between school-based learning and the skills required in the work force. The career clusters available to students are Arts and Media; Business and Finance; Construction Technologies and Design; Environmental, Natural Resources and Agriculture; Government, Education, and Human Services; Health and Biosciences; Retail, Tourism, Recreation and Entrepreneurship; and Technologies, Manufacturing, Communications and Repair. Career and Technical Education also offers worksite experience, worth 2 credits towards graduation, through the following courses: cooperative work experience, child development careers, Marketing II, art career skills and work experience for special education students. In addition to maintaining a weekly journal and participating in a school-to-career class, students spend six hours a week at a career site, either during the school day or after school hours, observing and working with experts in their chosen field. Students, parents, teachers, counselors, administrators, program coordinators and employers work together to develop a detailed plan to connect school-based and work-based learning.

The Architecture, Construction and Engineering (ACE) Mentor Program of Connecticut allows students to work with professionals from Fletcher-Thompson, INC to learn the fundamentals of building design and construction. The Business department takes students on job-shadowing excursions throughout the year, such as to Pitney Bowes. The Sikorsky Internship Program allows students the chance to work in the manufacturing area for the summer on union pay grade. Other partnerships with post-secondary institutions and the community include Southern Connecticut State University on-site admissions program; the American Legion Oratorical Contest; the Shelton High School Scholarship Program which works with community organizations; an emergency medical technology course; the school district's Mentoring Program; the Valley United Way Youth Leadership Program; Housatonic Community College's High School Partnership Program; Housatonic Community College's Bridges Program; and a partnership with Sacred Heart University to deliver a financial aid program to Shelton parents. Teachers often take classes on field trips to local colleges and universities; for example, students attended an accounting workshop at Naugatuck Valley Community College, an SCC Leadership Conference at Southern Connecticut State University, a physics competition at Yale University, a True Colors Conference and Early College Experience Globalization Conference at the University of Connecticut, or a cadaver lab demonstration at Yale New Haven Medical School.

Shelton High School offers an extensive variety of co-curricular activities for its students ranging from sports teams to special interest clubs and service organizations. SHS has a 58.3% participation rate in 28 different athletic teams including baseball, basketball, football, cheerleading, cross country, golf, indoor track, lacrosse, soccer, swim team, tennis, track, volleyball, wrestling and a unified sports team for special and general education students. There

also is a Shelton-New Haven cooperative ice hockey team. Approximately half of all athletes participate in more than 1 sport. In the 2007-2008 school year, student athletes were awarded 127 jackets, 199 new letters, 246 pins and 169 trophies. Student athletes are honored at the end of each season with additional coaches' awards and individual post-season honors at team banquets.

Students also participate in over 55 special interest co-curricular activities including Band/Marching Units including Percussion and Winter Guard (146), Student Council (100), Drama Club (85), Ski and Snowboard Club (116), Child Development Club (25), Distributive Education Club of America (DECA) (75), Art Club (15), Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) (38), Tech Ed Club (50), Math Club (10), Academic Bowl Team (8), Book Club (16), Chess Club (4), Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) (44), Film Club (10), Home Economics Club (14), Junior Statesmen of America (JSA) (30), Poetry Club (9), Pom Pons (14), Renaissance Club (45), Science Club (10), yearbook (23) and the school newspaper (34). There is also a large number of language and cultural clubs, such as the East Asian Club (39), French Club (80), Italian Club (135), Latin Club (15), Polish Club (21), Portuguese Club (9), Spanish Club (320) and Diversity Club (15).

Some service organizations include Key Club (26), Interact Club (15), Green Tees (15), Habitat for Humanity (40), Make a Difference Club (36) and Best Buddies (30). Shelton High offers its students an opportunity to earn credit upon successful completion of 150 hours of volunteer work. Presently, 88 students are working to complete this school and community option. Students are also active participants in the Southern Connecticut Conference Diversity Dream Team, interacting with students from the 20 culturally and economically diverse high schools in the area. Students and faculty also participate in the Valley United Way High School Volunteer Council. Youth to Youth members serve as role models to elementary and intermediate school students through a variety of activities. During Winter Recess in 2007, students and teachers volunteered building sidewalks and working in elementary schools in Tijuana, Mexico. Additionally, each student athletic team participates in community service activities.

Students at Shelton High School have opportunities to participate, excel and be recognized in all areas. Students are acknowledged as Students of the Month, CAPT Scholars, and recipients of Marking Period Recognition Awards. Shelton High School also recognizes its honor roll students each marking period. For the 2nd marking period of the 2008-2009 school year, 10.4 % of the student body earned high honors while 20.8% achieved second honor status. Seniors in the class of 2008 were awarded \$226,563.04 in scholarships for excellence in academics, arts, athletics, school and community service, citizenship and leadership. The school's National Honor Society

has a membership of 95 scholars; 200 students are members of our 3 world language honor societies: French (23), Italian (60) and Spanish (117). The Robotics Team is currently in its 11th season of regional and national competition. It recently earned 10th place out of 59 teams in the For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (F.I.R.S.T.) New England Regional Competition and received the Xerox Creativity Award for Robot Design. The SHS Academic Bowl Team engages in both local and interstate competition. The award-winning school newspaper, Gael Winds, is recognized annually on the state and national level. In the past 5 years, Gael Winds has received 1st place with special merit national ranking. They were selected Most Outstanding Newspaper in 2008 for service to the community. Six student journalists have been selected to represent the State of CT as AI Neuharth USA Today Free Spirit Journalism Scholars, and 1 student of only 33 nationwide served as a Peter Jennings fellow. In the last 8 years, the SHS chapter of DECA has received over 20 state trophies for marketing competition events and has had 10 state officers, 3 state presidents and 2 national officers. At this year's FBLA State Leadership Conference, 1 student was elected state treasurer, and another was named to Who's Who of Connecticut FBLA. The Shelton FBLA chapter was recognized as 1 of 3 gold chapters in the state, and 4 other students earned individual recognition. Over 275 science projects were submitted to The Shelton High School Tenth Annual Science Fair, and \$1600 in prize money was awarded. Eight students were selected as overall winners and advanced to the 2008 CT State Science Fair at Quinnipiac University.

Shelton High School's improvement plan is aligned with our school's mission statement by setting forth goals to prepare our students to be knowledgeable, responsible and productive members of society. Shelton High School's four-pronged improvement plan includes academic, social, communication, and research and development goals. Individual academic disciplines have set departmental goals aligned with the plan in order to improve curriculum, instruction and student achievement. Faculty meetings are often structured as professional learning communities. Another initiative is to provide increased opportunities for staff members to work inter and intra-departmentally to assist in instructional planning. Departments are also in the process of developing summative and formative common assessments and rubrics. Academic goals are driven by the results of the district's standardized test scores.

To ensure a student's social and emotional needs are met, data from discipline referrals, suspensions and expulsions are examined. To assist in the development of school-wide systems of support to foster appropriate student behavior and a positive school environment, 18 staff members were trained in Positive Behavior Support and a Discipline Review Board was instituted to address recurring discipline issues. To increase overall school safety, the headmaster created and instituted a new fire drill and emergency procedure plan along with a 1 page, user-friendly sheet of procedures; a Safe Return Form for students with safety concerns

also was established. The Leadership Team has been revised, and administrative staff has been trained in the use of classroom walk through data. Faculty and Student Advisory Boards have been implemented. The headmaster also has expanded opportunities to acknowledge student accomplishments through students and employee of the month recognition.

Shelton High School provides students opportunities to succeed in several aspects of school and community life. On-going curriculum revision to meet the diverse needs and learning styles of all students and the implementation of technology to enhance learning are key components of the district's commitment to prepare students to reach their full potential and to meet the challenges they will face in the future. Student/parent conferences are encouraged to develop short and long term planning for students. Increased use of a variety of communication media, including an updated website, Headmaster's Bulletin, and Alert Now phone messages, ensure that all stakeholders are provided opportunities for participation in the academic and social/emotional life of the students. Shelton High School also utilizes current research as well as the NEASC accreditation process to maximize teaching and learning at our school.

SHELTON HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

Shelton High School is a learning community where students are expected to meet high academic and behavioral standards while developing to their full potential. We are committed to providing our diverse student body with a safe environment characterized by respect. Our staff, students, parents, and community work collaboratively to encourage life-long learning and responsible citizenship.

Academic Expectations -- The Shelton High School Student:

- Uses information to formulate and support ideas
- Works independently and cooperatively
- Writes and speaks fluently
- Thinks critically and creatively to solve problems
- Demonstrates technological literacy
- Appreciates the arts
- Understands the life-long value of physical wellness
- Connects material from multiple subjects

Civic and Social Expectations -- The Shelton High School Student:

- Contributes responsibly to the school and community
- Values diversity and its importance
- Understands democratic thought and process
- Takes responsibility for his/her education
- Demonstrates respect, integrity, and honesty in all endeavors

COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

TEACHING and LEARNING STANDARDS

MISSION and EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

CURRICULUM

INSTRUCTION

ASSESSMENT FOR STUDENT LEARNING

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

Mission and Expectations for Student Learning

The school's mission statement describes the essence of what the school as a community of learners is seeking to achieve. The expectations for student learning are based on and drawn from the school's mission statement. These expectations are the fundamental goals by which the school continually assesses the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Every component of the school community must focus on enabling all students to achieve the school's expectations for student learning.

1. The mission statement and expectations for student learning shall be developed by the school community and approved and supported by the professional staff, the school board, and any other school-wide governing organization.
2. The school's mission statement shall represent the school community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning.
3. The school shall define school-wide academic, civic, and social learning expectations that:
 - are measurable.
 - reflect the school's mission.
4. For each academic expectation in the mission, the school shall have a targeted level of successful achievement identified in a rubric.

5. The school shall have indicators by which it assesses the school's progress in achieving school-wide civic and social expectations.
6. The mission statement and the school's expectations for student learning shall guide the procedures, policies, and decisions of the school and shall be evident in the culture of the school.
7. The school shall review regularly the mission statement and expectations for student learning using a variety of data to ensure that they reflect student needs, community expectations, the district mission, and state and national standards.

Mission and Expectations for Student Learning

Conclusions

The mission and expectations for student learning at Shelton High School were developed by the school community, approved by the faculty and board of education, and are supported by all stakeholders. The mission and expectations committee included six student members, one parent, a school counselor, seventeen teachers, and one board of education member. Beginning in October of 2008 at the direction of the headmaster, faculty members reviewed the previous mission statement. The committee recognized the need to draft a new statement and expectations for student learning. The document underwent revision between the first meeting in December 2008 and February 2009 when the committee unanimously approved the mission statement. During a February 2009 meeting, each committee member presented an academic, civic, or social expectation. At a March 2009 committee meeting, the expectations underwent another

revision. For a two-week period, faculty members reviewed the document and suggested changes or modifications. The faculty members approved the mission and expectations in March 2009 by a 116-5 margin. The board of education approved the new statement in April 2009, and the parent/teacher/student organization and the student council approved the mission and expectations in May 2009. During the 2009-2010 school year, the mission committee solicited input from other schools and developed school-wide rubrics piloted in the 2010-2011 school year. The mission statement has been published on the website and posted around the school, is printed in the school handbook, and is frequently referenced in morning announcements by the headmaster. Furthermore, both the mission and expectations are mentioned by some teachers as being referenced within particular lessons. Thus, the faculty, administration, and students have demonstrated increasing ownership of the mission and expectations, ensuring that the document is a driving force in the day-to-day operation of the school. (self-study, teachers, school leaders, panel presentation, students, classroom observations)

The Shelton High School Mission Statement represents the school community's fundamental beliefs about student learning. Familiarity with the mission and its role in the Shelton learning community varies among members. A large majority of students is able to discuss key phrases of the mission and expectations document. Some students are able to reference how specific standards are reflected in learning objectives of class assignments. Some students are able to indicate which expectations apply most appropriately to specific classes. Department heads have aligned the mission and expectations with the instructional objectives of curricular departments. Students are aware that the level of expectations in individual classes has been raised as a result of the implementation of the new expectations for student learning. Parents express deep satisfaction with the scope and level of difficulty of the challenges their students receive in the classroom and within the school community. Board of education members and parents reflect an appreciation for, and satisfaction with, the administration's and staff members' efforts to meet the educational needs and ensure the safety of the children. In accordance with the mission, students learn collaboratively and feel supported in planning their own academic programs. Parents recognize that their children have taken responsibility and believe teachers have demonstrated a vested interest in increased student learning. Therefore, Shelton High School

students and parents believe that teachers challenge students and involve them as partners in the learning process as outlined in the mission. (students, classroom observations, panel presentation, parents, board of education members, student shadowing)

The faculty has identified the school's academic, civic, and social expectations for student learning and has developed eight rubrics to define and assess student achievement in each of the academic areas. Academic expectations are identified in each curricular area and in the program of studies, and specific levels of performance are defined in rubrics that are currently in the piloting stage. Shelton High School has been piloting these rubrics in academic areas since the spring of 2009, but there is no current school-wide effort to collect data pertaining to student achievement. Although academic departments have claimed responsibility for specific learning expectations, teachers are not uniformly required to use specific general rubrics for their content area assessments. In addition to an increased graduation credit requirement for the class of 2014, SHS has added a 40-hour community service graduation requirement. Students and parents have an increased understanding of academic expectations and how students will go about displaying mastery, but need clarification on the indicators for the civic and social expectations outlined by the school. (self-study, teachers, students, parents)

There are general rubrics delineating four levels of proficiency in technology, communication, connections, independent and collaborative work, physical wellness, critical thinking, arts appreciation, and information. Students are aware of these rubrics and have a general understanding of how to apply departmental and course-specific rubrics to assess their own performance. Development of common departmental summative and formative assessment is ongoing, and many departments have established and currently utilize common assessments for midterms and finals. However, department heads and faculty members need to identify the necessary data to clarify the congruence between academic expectations for learning and Shelton High School graduation requirements. Additionally, students and parents do not express a clear understanding of the connection between the eight rubrics, specific content areas, and graduation requirements. (students, self-study, observations, student work, meetings with students).

Shelton High School has established social and civic expectations based on the school mission statement. Students are aware of these expectations, but their awareness would be heightened with the addition of clarifying indicators for those expectations. There are several potential indicators, including a reduction in the suspension rate, student participation in clubs and sports, and an increased community service requirement for the class of 2014. . Without uniform statements of expectations, clarifying indicators of progress toward those expectaions, and objective assessment, progress in civic and social areas is possible, but not measurable. (self-study, teachers, panel presentations, students)

The mission statement guides decision-making and the implementation of programs and activities at Shelton High School. Numerous recent developments at the school indicate an increased alignment of practices and protocols with the mission. Starting with the class of 2014, students will complete additional community service hours and receive additional mandatory science instruction. The new school attendance policy has placed greater emphasis on student responsibility and academic achievement. In an attempt to hold students to high expectations, SHS has eliminated the general instructional level and combined it with the more rigorous academic level. Other examples showing alignment with the mission include house and behavioral intervention teams, recognition of individual and collective student and staff accomplishments, and weekly school improvement plan meetings. Additionally, students have demonstrated an increased interest in club participation. Teachers, administrators, and members of the support staff make repeated connections between the mission statement and daily activities. The provision for counseling services within the in-school-suspension program is an extension of the mission statement, but funding for the continuation of that service has been eliminated. At Shelton High School, there is a pervasive climate of mutual respect, caring, and support between students, parents, professional staff members, and administrators. (self-study, teachers, students, student shadowing, parents)

The Shelton High School faculty has developed a plan for the review of the mission statement and expectations of student learning. With the new student management system, *Infinite Campus*, the school now has the means to collect and collate student data. It is not, however, utilized to a satisfactory degree that will provide reliable data on the progress toward the school's mission. The leadership team, consisting of curriculum leaders, department chairpersons, housemasters, and the headmaster, meets weekly to address the school improvement plan. Specifically, the school learning community intends to review the mission statement annually. In an effort to better identify and assist at-risk students, the school has developed house and behavior intervention teams. The administration is using tracking data, based on disciplinary referrals, to better identify and address diverse student needs. By reducing the size of ninth grade homerooms, the school has partially addressed the need for a program to personalize the learning experience for students, but more structure and greater understanding of the role of student homerooms as a means for personalizing learning are needed to fully address the need to personalize every student's high school experience. The building also houses a youth services bureau designed to reach out to and serve as a resource for at-risk students. In order to more fully identify needs, inform decision-making, and meet the needs of its student population, SHS must make additional and more effective use of the data collection systems now available within the building. (self study, parents, students, school leaders)

Commendations

1. The broad base of participation from the school community in developing the mission and expectations for student learning
2. The level of ownership of the school's mission and expectations demonstrated by students
3. The positive, respectful, climate established by the administration and faculty members that is prominently professed in the mission
4. The ability of the faculty, students, staff, and parents to articulate the values and beliefs expressed in the school mission statement
5. The frequent referencing of the mission statement in school publications, postings, mailings, daily announcements, and school web pages

6. The implementation of smaller homeroom environments for current ninth graders as a first step toward personalizing learning and advancing the school's civic and social expectations

Recommendations

1. Develop and implement school-wide rubrics designed to specifically assess academic expectations for student learning
2. Develop ways to collect and analyze data from school-wide rubrics assessment to inform decision-making and to measure progress toward the mission
3. Include representatives of the non-certified staff as well as increased parent and student representation in the annual review of the mission and expectations
4. Reinstate the counseling services component of the in-school-suspension program as a means to further the mission for all students
5. Develop clarifying indicators of progress toward achieving the school's civic and social expectations for student learning

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

Curriculum

The curriculum, which includes coursework, co-curricular activities, and other school-approved educational experiences, is the school's formal plan to fulfill its mission statement and expectations for student learning. The curriculum links the school's beliefs, its expectations for student learning, and its instructional practices. The strength of that link is dependent upon the professional staff's commitment to and involvement in a comprehensive, ongoing review of the curriculum.

1. Each curriculum area shall identify those school-wide academic expectations for which it is responsible.
2. The curriculum shall be aligned with the school-wide academic expectations and shall ensure that all students have sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve each of those expectations.
3. The written curriculum shall:
 - prescribe content;
 - integrate relevant school-wide learning expectations;
 - identify course-specific learning goals;
 - suggest instructional strategies;
 - suggest assessment techniques including the use of school-wide rubrics.

4. The curriculum shall engage all students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking as well as provide opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills.
5. The curriculum shall:
 - be appropriately integrated.
 - emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage.
6. The school shall provide opportunities for all students to extend learning beyond the normal course offerings and the school campus.
7. There shall be effective curricular coordination and articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.
8. Instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, staffing levels, and the resources of the library/media center shall be sufficient to allow for the implementation of the curriculum.
9. The professional staff shall be actively involved in the ongoing development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum based on assessments of student performance in achieving the school's academic expectations and course specific learning goals.
10. The school shall commit sufficient time, financial resources, and personnel to the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum.
11. Professional development activities shall support the development and implementation of the curriculum.

CURRICULUM

Conclusions

Shelton High School (SHS) has recently rewritten its mission statement to include academic, civic, and social expectations. Each curriculum area has identified school-wide academic expectations for which it assumes responsibility. Curriculum areas clearly articulate who is responsible for the school-wide expectations; for example, the music, science, and social studies departments are responsible for the expectation that the SHS student uses information to formulate and support ideas. Most core curriculum courses have written curriculum guides which outline major topics, essential questions, and suggested assessment strategies. However, these guides do not explicitly tie the course curriculum to the academic learning expectations from the mission. Many curriculum guides are not organized around standards but rather contain a list of prescribed content, suggested timelines, and activities with minimal inclusion of clearly outlined department-wide common assessments. Shelton High School needs to more clearly align its written curriculum with the school's mission and expectations for student learning. (self-study, curriculum guides, observations)

The entire curriculum at Shelton High School is not yet clearly aligned with the school-wide academic expectations and does not offer all students sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve each of those expectations. With the adoption of the school mission statement, Shelton High School began a formal alignment of the curriculum and academic expectations. All written curriculum guides do not yet show a clear connection between course content and the expectations as outlined in the school's mission statement. Many teachers post daily learning objectives on their boards, but the daily learning objectives are not always clearly articulated to all students. Essential questions are addressed only to a limited extent. Further work needs to be done to update all curricula and to more clearly align the written

curriculum and the school's learning expectations. (classroom visits, curriculum guides, program of studies)

The curriculum at Shelton High School provides a prescribed content for core academic courses which integrates relevant school-wide learning expectations only to a limited extent. Clear and specific learning goals are written for most core academic courses but are non-existent for many electives. In fact, some elective courses do not have written curricula. Some courses at Shelton High School rely on an outside curriculum to drive instructional decisions; these are Advanced Placement (AP) courses, University of Connecticut (UCONN) courses, and SAT preparation courses. Some courses allow for learning outside of Shelton High School including the Bridgeport Regional Aquaculture Science and Technology Center, the Regional Center for the Arts, and the Educational Center for the Arts. Those courses rely on their own curriculum, making it difficult to align with the Shelton High School Mission and learning expectations. The world language department has a written curriculum for the French and Spanish programs, but there is no curriculum for the Italian program. Instructional strategies are contained in some department curriculum documents. Assessment techniques including the use of school-wide rubrics are not clearly articulated across the curriculum. School-wide rubrics tied to the school's mission and expectations are being piloted and are not currently in place in curricula. Written curriculum documents need to be developed for the courses where it does not exist, and the school needs to more explicitly tie the content in individual courses to the school's mission and expectations. To facilitate this alignment of the curriculum and to ensure that every course has a complete curriculum, the school should revise and consistently implement its uniform format to create documents for all courses that include all necessary elements described in the standard for accreditation. (curriculum guides, teachers, self-study)

Shelton High School's curriculum does not provide opportunities for engaging all students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking. There are a few opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills across the content areas. For example, the social studies department has a number of learning activities and assessments which could be considered inquiry, but they are all listed as

“Suggested Assessment Tools and Methods” and are not mandated. There is no clear expectation that every teacher teaching a section of a given course will choose that particular assessment or activity. The algebra curriculum provides teachers with ideas for higher order thinking activities as well as authentic application, but there is no guarantee that students in every algebra class at Shelton High School will have the common experience of these activities. Students enrolled in some courses have an opportunity for an authentic learning experience. The Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) group allows some students to practice their business skills with real experience. The school store offers opportunities for students to apply what they are learning in an authentic manner. The Cooperative Work Experience (CWE), Marketing II, and early childhood development programs afford seniors the opportunity to learn in a real-world environment. Students enrolled in journalism courses have the opportunity to work on the school newspaper *Gael Winds*, providing them with experience in newspaper production. Thus, while opportunities do exist at Shelton High School for students to engage in higher order thinking and authentic learning experiences, these opportunities need to be expanded and formalized to include all students. (curriculum guides, program of studies, self-study)

The curriculum at Shelton High School is appropriately integrated within individual departments, but there is very little integration across disciplines. In most areas, the curriculum does not emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage. Results from the Endicott Survey indicate that 55.8% of parents believes their children have numerous opportunities to study topics in depth. Depending on the department, students must either take courses in a prescribed sequence or successfully complete an introductory course before moving on to one that is more advanced. In the social studies department, there is a clearly prescribed sequence, with all freshman required to take World History, sophomores taking Modern World History, and juniors taking United States History. In math, students must take Algebra II before being allowed to take pre-calculus. Within individual departments, there are content-specific concepts which may be taught across multiple courses, such as the incorporation of geography and economics into different social studies classes. While individual concepts may informally appear across

curricular areas, the curriculum needs to be more formally integrated across the disciplines. (teachers, curriculum guides, self-study)

Shelton High School provides multiple opportunities for all students to extend learning beyond the normal course offerings and the school campus. Students have the opportunity to earn credit beyond the limits of the campus through courses at the Bridgeport Regional Aquaculture Science and Technology Center, the Regional Center for the Arts, and the Educational Center for the Arts. The school offers a wide range of clubs and activities to meet the needs of individual learners. For example, students interested in journalism and publication can participate in the school newspaper *Gael Winds* or the school year book *Argus*. There are currently 25 sports programs which Shelton High School offers, and in the 2009-2010 academic year, there was a total of 399 male and 294 female athletes. Additionally, there are 46 clubs with over 900 active student participants. Students may take advantage of these club offerings during the enrichment period of the school day or after school. Recently, the school has moved to a “pay to participate” system for sports teams and some extra-curricular activities which may potentially reduce student participation. Community service is a part of the curriculum at Shelton High School; the class of 2014 has a graduation requirement to complete 40 hours of community service (10 per year). Students in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades can take the course School and Community where one credit can be earned for completing 150 hours of approved community service. With the recent decrease in school funding, there has been a decrease in the number of field trips offered to students, and, while there are many opportunities for students to expand their involvement in the SHS community, the impact of “pay to participate” must be monitored to ensure that all students at the school have equal access to extra-curricular opportunities. (teachers, self-study, student handbook)

There is some curricular coordination and articulation among all academic areas within Shelton High School, but the curriculum does not consistently emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage. Core subjects are coordinated, articulated, and aligned with state standards among all academic areas within the school, but, elective courses do not yet have written curricula. The curriculum is not

aligned K-12, and there is currently no formal plan to achieve this. Department heads meet weekly, but progress on the curriculum development cycle is not ongoing. All curriculum revision and writing has been put on hold for more than one school year as a result of budget concerns and preparation for the accreditation visit. Some department's curriculum development cycles have not been reviewed in 4-5 years, depending on when development was last done. The curriculum format is standardized across departments, but adherence to the format is inconsistent and hampered by the lack of active participation in curriculum development of all members in each department. It is essential that a well-articulated curriculum which clearly reflects the school's mission and expectations includes active communication and coordination with sending schools. Great efforts should be taken to confirm that all students are offered optimum academic opportunities based on effective curricular coordination to ensure that expectations are being addressed. (teachers, department heads, administrators)

Instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, staffing levels, and the resources of the media center are not sufficient to allow for the implementation of the curriculum. Students view the transition from middle school to high school as a technological "step back in time." They yearn for the regular infusion of technology into the curriculum and express frustration with the school's level of technological sophistication. The media center is a large, well equipped hub of Shelton High School and is able to offer resources to support to the curriculum. The elimination of 3 library staff positions have caused difficulties in service. The entire media center and its resources are currently handled by one media specialist, who is also the library media department head for the entire school system. The media center is comprised of three up-to-date computer labs, printed materials, and adequate seating for several classes at once. While the library media curriculum is aligned to the State of Connecticut Information and Technology Literacy Frameworks and instructs high school students in technology literacy, research, citation fundamentals, and information literacy, curriculum implementation has been hampered by recent budget restrictions, reducing the library staff in the media center. Currently the media center is under-utilized because of these staffing problems. The supervision, technical help, and set-up of incoming

classes requires the majority of the media specialist's time throughout the day; therefore, the library media curriculum is set aside and is not being delivered to all students. The media center needs to be fully integrated to the curriculum and measures should be put in place to allow it to serve its very important function related directly to several school-wide expectations: use of information, independent work, and technological literacy. (library media specialist, teachers, self-study)

The professional staff at Shelton High School is not actively involved in ongoing professional development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum. As a result of budget cuts throughout the district, there is no current or ongoing professional development pertaining to evaluation and revision of the curriculum, and there are no departmental data teams in place to utilize data-driven research and to show each student's performance in achieving the school's academic expectations. Currently, several core academic departments including math and English collect common assessment data and use this to revise what needs to be changed or re-taught in day-to-day class work, but planned formal department-wide student assessments do not take place at regular intervals. Department-wide rubrics are used, but the data from them is not systematically tracked and utilized to develop and revise curriculum. Development of data teams to objectively monitor students' achievement of academic expectations and widespread involvement of professional staff would better facilitate curriculum revision. (curriculum guides, self-study, teachers)

Shelton High School does not currently commit sufficient time, financial resources, or personnel to the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum. Budgetary losses during the 2010-2011 academic year included 13.5 positions. Extensive budget cuts in the district have resulted in the termination of curriculum development, evaluation, and revision. Some curriculum documents are dated and in dire need of revision, but, across disciplines, there is no organized, systematic method of developing, evaluating, and revising curriculum. Ongoing development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum is not a school or district priority, and this has had a negative impact on student learning. (teachers, leadership team, self-study)

Limited professional development activities are available to support the development and implementation of the curriculum to a limited extent. Formal training for curriculum development has not been included in professional development activities. There have been no curriculum-based professional days in recent years. It is not clear if or when the high school's training for curriculum development will begin again as there are no formal or informal plans to do so. Professional development activities for curriculum training are necessary to enhance the creation of an effective curriculum to serve all students and to ensure that they receive opportunities to achieve the mission and academic expectations of the school. (teachers, department leaders, self-study)

Commendations

1. The diversity of courses offered to students
2. The multiple levels of courses to challenge learners
3. The wide range of extra-curricular activities including award winning *Gael Winds* school paper
4. The core curriculum that is tied to state standards

Recommendations

1. Implement a formal curriculum development schedule to update and align curriculum and to provide curriculum in all courses in all areas
2. Examine the impact of the "pay to participate" program on student participation in sports and extra-curricular activities
3. Implement a process for regular cross-curricular collaboration
4. Include data and recommendations from sending schools in the curriculum writing process in order to insure adequate K-12 alignment
5. Align the written curriculum with the school's mission and expectations and articulate the alignment with the community

6. Reinstate support staff in the library media center to allow library media specialist to implement curriculum
7. Develop data teams to effectively align curricula with student needs and the mission expectations

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

Instruction

The quality of instruction in a school is the single most important factor affecting the quality of student learning, the achievement of expectations for student learning, the delivery of curriculum, and the assessment of student progress. Instructional practices must be grounded in the school's mission and expectations for student learning, supported by research in best practice, and refined and improved based on identified student needs. Teachers are expected to be reflective about their instructional strategies and to collaborate with their colleagues about instruction and student learning.

1. Instructional strategies shall be consistent with the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning.
2. Instructional strategies shall:
 - personalize instruction;
 - make connections across disciplines;
 - engage students as active learners;
 - engage students as self-directed learners;
 - involve all students in higher order thinking to promote depth of understanding;
 - provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge or skills;
 - promote student self-assessment and self-reflection.
3. Teachers shall use feedback from a variety of sources including other teachers, students,

supervisors, and parents as a means of improving instruction.

4. Teachers shall be expert in their content area, knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches, and reflective about their own practices.
5. Discussion of instructional strategies shall be a significant part of the professional culture of the school.
6. Technology shall be integrated into and supportive of teaching and learning.
7. The school's professional development program shall be guided by identified instructional needs and shall provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies.
8. Teacher supervision and evaluation processes shall be used to improve instruction for the purposes of enhancing student learning and meeting student needs.

INSTRUCTION

Conclusions

About half of Shelton High School (SHS) teachers employs instructional strategies that align with the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning. According to the Endicott College Survey, 50% of teachers say that the school's mission statement does not influence their teaching methods. Although almost all classrooms have the mission statement and expectations for student learning posted, they are only sporadically part of instruction. There is exciting teaching and learning taking place in those classrooms where the mission statement

and expectations for student learning are followed. Students work in groups, reflect on their learning, create projects for the science fair, publish an award-winning newspaper, build DNA models, play vocabulary-based games, employ peer editing techniques, create a “gallery walk,” present PowerPoint projects where students become teachers, create a Facebook page based on a character from a book, explore challenging questions such as, “what is half of infinity,” and build a business from the ground up. When all teachers adopt instructional strategies that are aligned with the school’s expressed mission and expectations for student learning, all students will have increased opportunity to maximize their learning and fulfill the school’s expectations. (Endicott College Survey, teachers, students, panel presentation, student shadowing)

SHS is fortunate to have many teachers who inspire and challenge students through their use of diverse instructional strategies. According to the Endicott College Survey, 90% of teachers assume they promote self-reflection and self-assessment, but only 49% of students and 68% of parents agree with the statement. The English and world language departments employ portfolios as a means of self-assessment and self-reflection, and some other departments use rubrics for self-assessment or ask reflective questions on tests, but these activities are not universal. Although many projects required higher order thinking, including AP Free Response questions, multiple approaches to proofs, CAPT open response questions, and songs as a stepping stone for forming opinions about war and revolution, a significant majority of student work presented did not demonstrate higher order thinking. Some classroom activities require higher-order thinking and application of knowledge of skills such as creating a DNA model, a project inspired by Frederick Douglass, dancing as a blade of grass and graphing the movements, and a self-portrait project where students evaluated and portrayed their inner traits. Class projects across the disciplines did indicate that students were active learners in about half of the

classrooms that were observed. Although many projects incorporate more than one discipline, the use of formal connections across the disciplines is severely limited. A project that successfully crossed curriculum boundaries asked students in English classes to stage the murder scene in *Macbeth*, while students in forensics to use evidence to identify the killer, journalism students question witnesses, and photography students to document evidence. The teachers who are not employing differentiated instruction fail to ensure that students across all levels are making connections across the disciplines, are engaged as active learners, stay engaged as self-directed learners, use higher order thinking, apply knowledge of skills, self-assess, and self-reflect. Teachers have received very little professional development in differentiated instructional strategies so the absence of this strategy is not surprising. It is clear that many effective teaching strategies exist in the repertoire of teachers at SHS. If these teachers could exchange information and share their expertise with their colleagues, there could be more broadly effective use of best practices and effective teaching throughout the school. (Endicott College Survey, teachers, students, classroom observations, self-study)

Teachers at SHS do not have sufficient collaborative time to reflect on instruction, and they receive minimal feedback on their performance from students and parents. The schedule at SHS offers teachers time twice a month to collaborate with other teachers. The Endicott Survey indicates that only 43% of students reports that teachers ask for input on class instruction and only 18% of parents says they are asked for input regarding instruction. Some students report satisfaction with expressing concerns about instruction with guidance counselors and/or department chairs. SHS has a formal evaluation process for all educators. Non-tenured teachers receive feedback from curriculum leaders or housemasters four times a year as a means to

improve instruction. Non-tenured teachers report that they find the process helpful. However, the annual evaluation process for tenured teachers offers far less feedback for improving instruction. Teachers at SHS need better feedback from fellow teachers, students, parents, and supervisors as a means of improving instruction. (Endicott College Survey, teachers, students, self-study)

Many SHS teachers have advanced degrees in their content area, but they are not clearly knowledgeable about current research regarding instruction, nor are they regularly reflective about their own practices. According to the Endicott Survey, 88% of teachers at SHS has advanced degrees in their content areas, but teachers do not consistently use examples of current research on instructional practices that are proven to increase student achievement. For example, while teachers express the belief that they are knowledgeable about differentiation and personalization in the classroom, most have received only one in-service training and there is little follow-up to ensure practice of the new strategies in the classroom. Teachers refer to the school's scheduled collaboration time as their chief opportunity for reflection about their own practices, but collaboration is scheduled only twice a month. In the past year, many teachers have sought their own professional development opportunities in order to remain current in instructional practices. Providing more opportunities for professional development on instructional strategies as well as scheduling more opportunities for self-reflection and collegial exchange will lead to more teachers at SHS using and discussing the value of more research-based practices and the use of self-reflection to improve instruction. (Endicott Survey, teachers, classroom observations, self-study)

Schedule and funding problems prevent SHS from offering sufficient opportunities to make discussion of instructional strategies a significant part of the professional culture. The current schedule forces teachers to plan for many different courses with several ability levels. The limited non-instructional time teachers have within the school day is used for individual lesson preparation. While many of Shelton's highly motivated teachers maintain informal lines of communication for sharing instructional strategies and even collaborating on cross-curriculum instruction, there is insufficient formal collaboration within or across disciplines. For example, the collaboration between regular and special education teachers in science and social studies has been eliminated along with three special education positions. Additionally, the highly structured and rich collaboration established by the library media specialist with many faculty members has all but come to an end since the library staff of one secretary and two paraprofessionals has been eliminated. The scheduled time for faculty collaboration is not formally structured, reducing its effectiveness. The faculty meeting agendas for the last three years indicate no discussion of instructional strategies. As a result of recent budget cuts and an unwieldy schedule, SHS teachers do not have effective time for discussion of instructional strategies. (teacher meetings, teacher interview, self-study, staff meeting agendas)

Technology at SHS is neither integrated into nor supportive of teaching and learning. Some important purchases and improvements to technology have been made, but a great deal of the instructional technology throughout the building is outdated and inadequate. The science department recently received renovations including several new labs and a computer lab, but some science classrooms still lack the technology required for instructional practices to maximize learning. For example, microscopes are more than ten years old. The math department

has graphing calculators with overhead projection and Prometheus boards in two rooms. The world languages department has a new language lab which aids in pronunciation practice and assessment. There are computer carts for each core subject, but they are so slow that logging in can take over fifteen minutes to accomplish. There is a new television studio, but because all televisions have been removed from classrooms and the videography teacher has not been trained to use the new equipment, the studio remains virtually untouched. Although most core subject teachers have received a desktop computer and a printer in their classrooms, special education core teachers have not. Parents express worry that lack of access to current effective technology at SHS will negatively affect their children's post-high-school careers. If technology needs are not addressed at SHS so that every teacher has access to integrated technology to support teaching and learning on a daily basis, students will fall seriously behind in their technology skills. Thus the school needs to provide up-to-date technology and instruction for its use in the classrooms. (classroom observations, self-study, teachers, parents, students)

SHS provides professional development opportunities for teachers to develop and improve instructional strategies, but offerings are not always guided by identified instructional needs. For example, many teachers received training this year in the use of Promethean Boards, but only eight classrooms have boards. Admittedly, most in-house professional development has been put on hold for the past two years to work entirely on the NEASC Self-Study. Although twenty-six individual professional development opportunities were granted in the period from September to November in 2010, only 51% of teachers indicates that professional development is offered based on identified needs. Increased professional development opportunities that are directly aligned with instructional needs are required if the teachers at Shelton High School are expected

to deliver instruction that will maximize student learning. (teachers, Endicott College Survey, self-study)

At SHS, teacher evaluations for improving instruction are unequally utilized. Non-tenured teachers report that they receive useful feedback regarding their instructional practices four times per year through the evaluation process. Tenured teachers have a three-phase evaluation process, but some do not feel it provides useful feedback to improve instruction. The faculty union leaders (building representative and district-wide president) report that the current evaluation process for tenured teachers was recently revised without teacher input as to how this process could be helpful to instruction in the classroom. Past evaluation forms were created by a committee but provided little feedback for teachers. The practice of the supervisor walk-through at SHS has been very positive. Faculty members receive feedback data with no names attached, just information about how the teaching staff performs and could benefit from certain reforms. Walk-throughs and non-tenured evaluations are strong and provide instruction for the purposes of enhancing student learning, but the tenured evaluation process does not achieve the goal of providing appropriate feedback to improve instruction. (self-study, teachers, union representatives)

Commendations

1. The use of “the administrative walk-through” to gather data and provide feedback to teachers
2. The school community’s awareness of mission and expectations as it applies to instruction
3. The English and world languages departments’ use of a portfolio system to assess student learning
4. The system used to provide non-tenured teachers with meaningful feedback on instructional practices
5. Teachers’ expertise in their content area
6. The world language computer lab and new science labs as opportunities to integrate technology into instruction

Recommendations

1. Redesign the evaluation process for tenured teachers with input from faculty members and high school administrators
2. Implement instructional strategies in all courses that relate to the mission statement and expectations for student learning
3. Provide professional development in differentiated instruction
4. Provide opportunities to plan and deliver cross-disciplinary instruction
5. Schedule more frequent and structured collaborative time for teachers
6. Implement systems for more consistent feedback on instruction from students and parents

7. Implement more professional development on current research in effective instructional practices, including integration of technology
8. Schedule opportunities for teachers for structured self-reflection
9. Provide sufficient support staff personnel in the library/media center to facilitate the library/media specialist's effective delivery of instruction
10. Broadcast video productions from the studio to each classroom and provide adequate technology to receive it
11. Provide training in the use of the new videography equipment
12. Provide computers and printers to special education core teachers
13. Improve all student access to all instructional technology
14. Increase funding for professional development

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

Assessment of Student Learning

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Its purpose is to inform students regarding their learning progress and teachers regarding ways to adjust the curriculum and instruction to respond effectively to the learning needs of students. Further, it communicates to the school community the progress of students in achieving the school's expectations for student learning and course-specific learning goals. Assessment results must be continually discussed to improve curriculum and instruction.

1. The school shall have a process to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations in the mission based on school-wide rubrics.
2. The school's professional staff shall use data to assess the success of the school in achieving its civic and social expectations.
3. For each learning activity, teachers shall clarify to students the relevant school-wide academic expectations and course-specific learning goals that will be assessed.
4. Teachers shall base classroom assessment of student learning on school-wide and course-specific rubrics.
5. Teachers shall use varied assessment strategies to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies and to assess student growth over time.

6. Teachers shall meet collaboratively to discuss and share student work and the results of student assessments for the purposes of revising the curriculum and improving instructional strategies.
7. The school's professional development program shall provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of assessment strategies.
8. The school's professional staff shall communicate:
 - individual student progress in achieving school-wide academic expectations to students and their families;
 - the school's progress achieving all school-wide expectations to the school community.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

Conclusions

Shelton High School is developing a process to assess individual, but not school-wide, student progress in achieving the academic expectations of the mission statement based on school-wide rubrics. Every department in Shelton High School is accountable for measuring one or more school-wide academic expectation. Shelton High School is currently in the piloting stage of using school-wide rubrics, but teachers usually use departmental and course-specific rubrics. Most teachers have attempted to use school-wide rubrics on at least one assessment. Teachers recognize their need for further professional development because the majority of teachers does not know how to implement school-wide rubrics into their assessment process. The school and the students have little formal means of measuring individual student progress toward the mission expectations, nor do students recognize their achievements as part of

a school-wide endeavor. Thus, the school must continue to experiment with the use of rubrics, provide professional development for teachers in the effective use of rubrics, and create a system of recording and reporting the results of this assessment to the students and to the public in a meaningful way. (student work, student interviews, student shadowing, teachers, committee on assessment)

The Shelton High School faculty does not use data to assess the success of the school in achieving its civic and social expectations. Although the culture of active civic and social involvement is apparent at Shelton High School with student participation in a broad range of community and school activities, there is no formal assessment process nor indicators for the achievement of civic and social expectations outlined in the mission statement. The school requires students to complete 40 hours of community service to earn graduation credit and employs many ways of quantifying student participation in civic and social activities. There is a sufficient collection of data on participation and membership in extracurricular activities, attendance records, and discipline records (used to determine eligibility for privileges), however, the school does not use the collected data to formally assess school-wide achievement. Thus, the students understand quantitatively what they must do to fulfill their civic and social obligation, but they have no indication of what an acceptable qualitative level of achievement involves. (attendance and discipline records, self-study, school and community profile, Shelton High School panel presentation)

Shelton teachers do not clarify to students the relevant school-wide academic expectations for each activity and only clarify course-specific learning goals that will be assessed on a limited basis. Many teachers clarify course-specific goals through daily objectives written on the board but make no mention of assessing school-wide academic expectations. Students feel their teachers make efforts to embed academic expectations and course-specific goals into their rubrics and other assessment tools; however, these are not directly stated and thus are not clearly understood. Students at Shelton High School are

presented with both academic expectations and course-specific learning goals at the beginning of the year through a variety of means such as, orientation, back to school night, and teachers' course syllabi. Parents and students also receive lists of academic expectations and course-specific learning goals in the student handbook, on the school website, and on individual teacher web pages. Parents say they fully understand what their child is expected to do in order to be successful on projects completed at home, as a result of clear rubrics assigned by teachers. However, teachers are not tying in specific school-wide academic expectations and course-specific learning goals for each learning activity as routine practice. Students are not accustomed to using the language associated with their achievement of specific school-wide academic expectations and course-specific learning goals. Most students do not perceive a direct link between what they are learning in class and how it affects their achievement of the school-wide expectations. (student work, students, student shadowing, teachers, parents, self-study)

Teachers at Shelton High School sometimes utilize course-specific rubrics but seldom use school-wide rubrics as a basis to assess classroom performance of student learning. Students are often provided with teacher-generated, assignment-specific grading criteria that clearly indicate teacher expectations for student learning but do not include school-wide academic expectations based on the mission statement. Course-specific rubrics are used by some departments for common assessments by all teachers who teach the same course. School-wide rubrics are sometimes employed succinctly and sometimes accompany the teachers' grading criteria as a means of providing students with feedback on how well they are achieving the academic mission expectations. Connections between course-specific rubrics and school-wide rubrics are not clearly conveyed to students, therefore the value of school-wide rubrics in their assessments is not apparent to students. (teachers, students, student work, self-study committee on assessment)

Teachers at Shelton High School use varied assessment strategies to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies, and they use varied assessments to assess student growth over time. Some SHS assessments are informal, such as direct questioning and teacher observation. Others include traditional assessments of homework, written and verbal quizzes, and written tests as well as notebook assessment. Video and power point presentations, model and robot creation, and desktop publishing projects are also used, along with a variety of poster board and art projects, science experiments, lab reports, and science fair projects. According to Endicott Survey results 74% of students believes teachers use a variety of assessment strategies, 99.2% of teachers states that they do use a variety, and 59.1% of parents believes that varied assessment is being used. Parents agree that their children's best classes are the ones in which a teacher assigns a grade based on a variety of assessments, and they believe that this is practiced by many of the teachers at Shelton High School. However, parents report that they believe math is lacking in the use of varied assessment. To encourage the use of varied assessment and to assess student growth over time, Shelton High School has a series of pretests in places; Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) Practice for freshmen, Pre-CAPT Interdisciplinary Writing for sophomores, and PSAT for sophomores and juniors. Multiple opportunities are given to students to reach a proficient score on CAPT, through such courses as reading for proficiency, and math for proficiency. Some teachers give students opportunities to revise their work in order for them to grow and work toward meeting course-specific learning goals. Departments such as math base a common assessment on CAPT skills and review student achievement data to determine areas of strength and weakness in order to improve student achievement. Also the English department assigns common formative assessments three times a year. Thus, there are many examples of varied assessment that allow students to demonstrate skills and knowledge and provide them opportunities to be measured accurately on what they know and can do. (student work, student shadowing, teachers, parents, self-study, Endicott Survey)

Teachers at Shelton High School meet collaboratively to discuss and share student work and the results of student assessments, and they often use the data to revise and improve instructional strategies, but this is not used to revise curriculum. Teachers meet ten times per year for faculty meetings, ten times per year for department meetings, and they are allotted one hour twice each month for discretionary collaboration. Much faculty meeting time has been used for small group collaboration on evaluating the school's progress toward meeting the NEASC standards. Some department and collaboration meeting time is dedicated to discussing and sharing student work and assessment results including the CAPT test scores. The insight gained from examination of student work and assessment performance on common midterm and final exams is often used to revise and improve classroom instruction. The English department uses the data to make revisions to the curriculum. Item analysis of CAPT scores is done in English, math, and science, but the data is not used in any useful way. Students benefit when teachers collaborate in the analysis of their school work and test scores. Changes made to instructional strategies and assessments in response to student performance would serve to ensure greater overall student success. The system can be used profitably to improve the curriculum as well. (self-study, teachers, self-study, department chairs, head master)

The school's professional development program has offered several opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies. According to the school self-study on assessment, teachers use allotted department meeting and collaboration time to develop assessment strategies. Assessment strategies that have been created during this time are some department-wide assessments and the skills rubrics for the career, technical, and physical education classes. In the last two years, teachers have been offered adequate opportunities to develop a broad range of student assessment strategies. Some outside professional development has proven beneficial to the English department in developing portfolio assessments. The science, math, career and technical, social studies, and world language departments have also written some common midterm and final assessments.

In addition, the science department had a daylong workshop that resulted in four to five formative assessments which were implemented last year. According to the Endicott Survey, 63.1% of staff members agrees that “the professional development program provides opportunities to collaborate with other teachers in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies”. However, there is no common planning time scheduled for departments to collaborate during the school day, and teachers have to meet after school hours. There is currently little continuity in conversation regarding assessments among department members and less time to continue broadening their range of assessment strategies. (professional development offerings, committee on assessment, self-study, Endicott Survey)

The professional staff at Shelton High School communicates some individual student progress of the academic learning expectations to students but does not communicate school-wide progress of academic expectations to the school community. The absence of a system to measure school-wide academic expectations means that the school is limited in its ability to communicate progress. The use of school-wide rubrics would allow students to gauge their progress toward Shelton High School’s mission-based academic expectations, but they are not used regularly by all teachers and there is no formal collection or explanation of the meaning of the results available. A comprehensive data management program, Infinite Campus, has recently been purchased and is being used for the first time during the 2010-2011 school year. All teachers use Infinite Campus to input student grades and attendance, but most teachers do not feel adequately trained in the operation of the program. The parent portal feature of Infinite Campus is not being used at this time, but it is the school’s intention to implement this feature at an undetermined future time. Shelton High School posts its mission statement and expectations for student learning on its website but does not currently reflect upon their school-wide achievement. When the school begins to report both individual and school progress to the community, potential for academic progress will increase and will become more meaningful, as will the mission and expectations.. (school website, assessment committee, parents)

Commendations

1. The development of some school-wide rubrics
2. The graduation requirement of ten community service hours per year starting with the class of 2014
3. The broad range of opportunities for students to fulfill their civic and social expectations
4. The clear expectations of assignments through the use of rubrics and other assessment tools
5. Teachers use of a wide variety of assessment strategies to assess student learning
6. The recognition of the need for teacher collaboration to guide instruction and assessment and affect curricular change
7. The communication of individual teachers' expectations on classroom assessments
8. The efforts of teachers to work collaboratively in order to develop assessment strategies
9. The use of Infinite Campus as a potential source of valuable data on student achievement and reporting mechanism for parents

Recommendations

1. Align course-specific and departmental rubrics with school-wide rubrics
2. Post school-wide rubrics on the school website to fully communicate learning expectations to students and parents
3. Provide professional development opportunities on the interpretation of data through the use of rubrics
4. Identify and record school-wide expectations for each major assignment or learning activity
5. Align course-specific rubrics to academic learning expectations
6. Develop a plan and process to analyze student achievement data

7. Develop a plan and process to assess school-wide achievement of the academic expectations
8. Provide formal time for members of the same department to develop assessments
9. Implement a program to regularly report individual student and school-wide progress toward the mission and expectations for learning
10. Provide teachers with professional development on the use of Infinite Campus as a means to gather data
11. Utilize Infinite Campus's parent portal to communicate student achievement

**COMMISSION ON
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

SUPPORT STANDARDS

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

SUPPORT STANDARD

Leadership and Organization

The way in which a school organizes learning for students, fosters leadership, and engages its members has a profound effect on teaching and learning. The professional culture of the school must be characterized by thoughtful, reflective, and constructive discourse about decision-making and practices, which supports student learning and well-being.

1. The school board and superintendent shall ensure that the principal has sufficient autonomy and decision-making authority to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning.
2. The principal shall provide leadership in the school community by creating and maintaining a shared vision, direction, and focus for student learning.
3. Teachers as well as administrators other than the principal shall provide leadership essential to the improvement of the school.
4. The organization of the school and its educational programs shall promote the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
5. Student grouping patterns shall reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, reflect current research and best practices, and support the achievement of the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
6. The schedule shall be driven by the school's mission and expectations for student learning

and shall support the effective implementation of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

7. Meaningful roles in the decision-making process shall be accorded to students, parents, and all members of the school staff to promote an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership.
8. Each teacher shall have a student load that enables the teacher to meet the learning needs of individual students.
9. There shall be a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult member of the school community in addition to the school guidance counselor who personalizes each student's educational experience, knows the student well, and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning.
10. The professional staff shall collaborate within and across departments in support of learning for all students.
11. All school staff shall be involved in promoting the well-being and learning of students.
12. Student success shall be regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed.
13. The climate of the school shall be safe, positive, respectful, and supportive, resulting in a sense of pride and ownership.
14. The school board shall support the implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning.

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

Conclusions

The Shelton High School (SHS) headmaster does not have sufficient autonomy and authority to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning. There is a varying perception of the headmaster's decision-making authority throughout the school and the district.

The district superintendent and the board of education state that the headmaster's autonomy is sufficient to lead to school in achieving its mission and expectations for student learning whereas members of the Shelton High School Leadership Team use terms such as "micromanagement" and "disregarded" to describe the working relationship between district and school leadership.

There is an observed disconnect in the relationship between district and school leaders that hinders the collaborative, reflective, and constructive effort necessary to move the school forward. Without sufficient autonomy or decision-making authority the headmaster will not be able to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning. (parents, teachers, administrators)

The headmaster has demonstrated leadership and conveyed a shared vision to all of the stakeholders in the school community. She has implemented rigorous academic and behavioral expectations, improved the school climate, and increased communication within the community. Remarkably, these efforts were completed during the final stages of a major construction and renovation project. She continued to guide the school community toward its mission after a destructive and disruptive fire and a variety of adverse situations relating to severe budget deficiency. The headmaster is widely visible and approachable. She is recognized by teachers, students, parents, and non-certified staff members as the unifying force moving the school

towards its mission and student expectations. The headmaster has made significant progress in recognizing student achievement in a variety of ways and has implemented and updated safety and security procedures, creating an environment in which all students feel safe. The students of Shelton High School benefit greatly from a headmaster who maintains a shared vision for the school and a consistent focus on student learning. (self-study, students, teachers)

Teachers, as well as administrators other than the headmaster, take an active role in the leadership at SHS. A faculty council allows teachers to address school needs and to voice their concerns. The school leadership team, which is comprised of the headmaster, housemasters, curriculum leaders, and department chairpersons, addresses student learning, school climate, and the overall mission of the SHS community. The leadership team works collaboratively to implement the school improvement plan. Teachers and staff members also serve in leadership roles as club and activity advisors and coaches. Teachers, housemasters, and support staff members take an active role in the leadership responsibilities at SHS. (self-study, teachers, administrators)

The organization and educational programs of SHS adequately promote the school's mission and expectations for students. The school is organized into three houses, numbered one, two, and three in order to create smaller organizations within the school. Each house has an office with a housemaster overseeing its assigned students. Teachers are organized by discipline into academic departments and each department is led by a chairperson. The headmaster, housemasters, department chairs, and curriculum leaders comprise the leadership council of the school. They meet regularly to exchange information, discuss educational issues, and recommend action steps. The house system, summer school program, adult education program, tutorial services, and student community service requirement all support the school's mission and expectations for

student learning. University of Connecticut coursework and credit are also available. The organization of the school and its variety of curricular and co-curricular programs foster the school's mission and expectations for student learning. (self-study, teachers, administrators)

Student grouping patterns at Shelton High School reflect the diversity of the student body. However, current leveling practices do not foster heterogeneity and are not consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning. Students in core academic courses are grouped according to ability and/or academic record in multiple levels including Advanced Placement, honors, college preparatory, academic, and general. Students are placed in the appropriate level based on the recommendations of teachers, school counselors, parents, and students as well as the students' previous academic performance. In some instances, students with special needs are afforded equal access to the curriculum through a system of inclusion. Currently, SHS has consolidated two levels, general and academic, beginning with the class of 2014. The school should examine carefully its grouping and leveling patterns as they pertain to its commitment to all students meeting high academic standards. (school counselors, teachers, panel presentation)

The rotating schedule at SHS offers limited support for the school's mission and expectations for student learning. The fifth period time slot is lengthened to 67 minutes of instruction and the following two classes have only 39 minutes. The lengthened fifth period allows for more in-depth instruction and more time for students to work on projects and presentations. It is more difficult to complete projects and presentations during the four 47- minute morning periods. Bimonthly, the daily schedule is modified to accommodate a 25-minute enrichment period. This time allows students to meet with clubs and organizations. The enrichment schedule assists SHS students in meeting the social and civic expectations. Some teachers express frustration with the

limitations of 47-minute learning periods when they attempt learning activities that challenge in-depth study and/or increase student involvement. Many teachers point to the schedule's restriction on efforts to collaborate during the school day. Formal collaboration is limited to bimonthly after-school meeting time used for department meetings and other professional activities. The overall scheduling of time at Shelton High School offers limited support for the implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. (self-study, teachers, administrators)

The atmosphere at SHS is positive and one of mutual respect among administrators, teachers, students, parents, and other staff members. Members of the SHS community can voice their concerns and suggestions in a variety of ways such as the faculty senate, SHS Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO), parent booster clubs, student council, and student advisory. Members of the school community have opportunities to provide input in the decision-making process of the school. (self-study, teachers, parents, administrators)

Shelton High School makes every effort to ensure that each teacher has a student load that enables him or her to meet the learning needs of individual students. Budgetary issues have impacted some class sizes at SHS through the elimination of teaching positions. Some classes are currently near class-size capacity according to the teacher contract. The teaching contract indicates that every reasonable attempt will be made to keep a regular class size to no more than thirty students. It also indicates that, in determining class size, the specialized needs of students with disabilities shall be considered. Currently, a reduction in support staff personnel has resulted in many students with IEPs no longer being given aides for support in the classroom. Class size is negatively impacting student achievement of learning expectations in some instances. (teachers, panel presentation, classroom observation)

Shelton High School is currently in the process of developing and implementing a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult member of the school community, in addition to the school counselor, who personalizes each student's educational experience, knows the student well, and assists the student in achieving school-wide expectations for student learning. The mentor program will serve this function once fully implemented. Currently, all students have the same homeroom teacher for the duration of their time at Shelton High School. Students develop a rapport with their homeroom teachers and feel comfortable in seeking their advice. A phase-in plan is currently in process to reduce the class size of homerooms, beginning with the current freshman class. This plan will be continued until all classes have smaller homeroom sizes. Students are also afforded the opportunity to interact with various non-teaching staff members such as the headmaster, housemasters, school resource officer, support staff, youth service bureau staff, and secretaries. Shelton High School recognizes the need for more personalized contact with individual students. (panel presentation, parents, students)

The professional staff at Shelton High School collaborates within and across departments in support of learning for all students. Scheduled collaboration takes place two afternoons per month. Teachers also collaborate informally before and after school and throughout the school day. Structure and use of collaboration time among departments is dependent upon need. The time is used, in some instances, for common planning and alignment of curriculum. There are collaborative classes in some areas of the regular education program and special education program and interdisciplinary courses. E-mail is also used as a means for teachers to collaborate. School leadership strongly encourages collaboration among colleagues; however, there is an urgent need for more formal time for teachers to collaborate within and across disciplines. (teachers, self-study, schedule)

All staff members at Shelton High School are involved in promoting the well-being and learning of students. For example, the youth service bureau is located in the school and works with school personnel, police, community resources, and youth and parents to provide educational programs and recreational activities. Two school nurses are employed at the high school to provide health services. A house system is in place, which allows administrators and clerical staff members to establish a more personal relationship with each student. Security personnel are also employed to help foster a safe and comfortable environment for all students. There are also a school psychologist and school social worker available for individual students and who also run groups. Budgetary constraints have resulted in the elimination of some staff members, including one of the two full-time social workers, leading to a reduction in the number of support groups available to students. The school currently runs a group for coping skills and a group for special education IEP students. The entire staff at Shelton High School works to promote the well-being and learning of students. (students, secretarial staff, nurses)

The success of students at SHS is regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed. Student success is recognized through regular newsletters to parents, the school newspaper, *Gael Winds*, local newspapers, award ceremonies, the website, public address announcements, and the display of student work and trophies in various display cases. Recognizing student success is an important and regular occurrence, instilling a sense of pride in students with a wide range of abilities. (self-study, students, panel presentation, facility tour)

SHS maintains a climate that is safe, supportive, and respectful. All students and staff members must wear an ID on a school-approved lanyard at all times to ensure that they are an active member of the school community. There are four rotating schedule onsite security guards as well as a school resource officer. A focus on student/teacher, student/ administrator,

teacher/administrator relationships has fostered increased mutual respect in the school. The SHS Mission and Expectations document encourages students to take responsibility for their education and actions, promoting respect and acceptance of all members of the school community. There is a sense of ownership among the students and staff members that reflects pride in the school. (self-study, students, teacher, observations)

SHS does not always receive the financial support necessary from the Shelton Board of Education (BOE) to implement the school's mission and expectations for student learning. Although the BOE approved the mission and expectations on April 22, 2009, its actions have not provided the appropriate funding and support to fully implement them. At this point, the working relationship between the BOE, the superintendent, and the Headmaster is not positive. Although the BOE has been supportive in the past, recent budget decisions have determined that the BOE does not have the ability to fully support the implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning. (students, parents, administrators, self-study)

Commendations

1. The headmaster's demonstration of leadership, shared vision, and focus on student learning
2. The efforts of the administration to include many members of the school community in a shared leadership model for school improvement
3. The supportive school climate that instills a sense of pride and ownership in the students
4. The visible and genuine celebration of student success and achievement

5. The dedication of the faculty and staff that has resulted in a safe and positive environment where students feel they are valued and can achieve academic success
6. Many available teacher leadership opportunities
7. The encouragement and use of teacher input as an instrument in advancing school improvement

Recommendations

1. Increase autonomy for the headmaster to direct the school toward its mission
2. Examine the current schedule in order to determine whether modifications are necessary to support the mission and school expectations
3. Increase support from the superintendent and board of education for the implementation of the school's mission and expectations
4. Provide more formal opportunities for teachers to meet and collaborate within and across departments
5. Implement a formal program to provide students with an adult member of the school community who assists students in achieving the school-wide expectations
6. Examine the current leveling practice to assess its effectiveness in supporting all learning expectations for all students

SUPPORT STANDARD

School Resources for Learning

Student learning and well-being are dependent upon adequate and appropriate support programs and services. The school is responsible for providing an effective range of integrated resources to enhance and improve student learning and well-being and to support the school's mission and expectations.

All Student Support Services

1. The school's student support services shall be consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
2. The school shall allocate resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve stated civic and social expectations.
3. Student support personnel shall enhance student learning by interacting and working cooperatively with professional and other staff and by utilizing community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students.
4. All student support services shall be regularly evaluated and revised to support improved student learning.

5. There shall be a system for effective and ongoing communication with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel, designed to keep them informed about the types of available student support services and identified student needs.
6. Student records, including health and immunization records, shall be maintained in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal and state law.
7. There shall be sufficient certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide effective counseling, health, special education, and library media services.

Guidance Services

8. The school shall provide a full range of comprehensive guidance services, including:
 - individual and group meetings with counseling personnel;
 - personal, career, and college counseling;
 - student course selection assistance;
 - collaborative outreach to community and area mental health agencies and social services providers;
 - appropriate support in the delivery of special education services for students.

Health Services

9. The school's health services shall provide:
 - preventive health services and direct intervention services;
 - appropriate referrals;
 - mandated services;
 - emergency response mechanisms;
 - ongoing student health assessments.

Library Information Services

10. The library/information services program and materials shall be fully integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program.
11. Library/information services personnel shall be knowledgeable about the curriculum and support its implementation.
12. A wide range of materials, technologies, and other library/information services that are responsive to the school's student population shall be available to students and faculty and utilized to improve teaching and learning.
13. Students, faculty, and support staff shall have regular and frequent access to library/information services, facilities, and programs as an integral part of their educational experience before, during, and after the school day.
14. The library/information services program shall foster independent inquiry by enabling students and faculty to use various school and community information resources and technologies.
15. Policies shall be in place for the selection and removal of information resources and the use of technologies and the Internet.

Special Education Services

16. The school shall provide special education services related to the identification, monitoring, and referral of students in accordance with local, state, and federal laws.

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Conclusions

Shelton High School (SHS)'s student support services are not adequate to meet the school's mission and expectation for student learning. Health services staff members provide a safe and secure environment for students through their daily routines and treat the students with dignity

and respect. Guidance department members help to establish the expectations for high school students through eighth grade orientations and ongoing support throughout students' four years. The library media specialist works diligently to help students meet their academic expectations through her instruction of research and information literacy skills. The special education department is challenged by the greatest loss through cuts in the budget process and, consequently, does not have the proper supports in place to help students succeed. Due to budget cuts, special education students no longer have collaborative classes in two core academic areas, and the burden of clerical work that includes scheduling of planning and placement team (PPT) meetings and the increase in caseload diminishes the ability of members of this department to adequately provide the proper support services for students. The SHS Student Support Services are not providing sufficient services to allow all students to meet the mission and expectations of the school. (school support staff, curriculum leaders, self-study)

At SHS, student support personnel enhance student learning by interacting and working cooperatively with staff members and by utilizing community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of the students. Support staff members refer students to outside agencies such as the Shelton Coalition to Stop Underage Drinking, Shelton Youth Service Bureau, and Youth 2 Youth Peer Advocates. Within SHS, program offerings include honors, college prep, and academic level courses, collaborative courses with special and regular education students, self-contained special education classes, post-graduate life skills courses, Advanced Placement courses (AP), University of Connecticut Early College Experience (ECE), English for students of other languages (ESOL), and Connecticut Career Certificates. There are also opportunities for students to participate in independent studies. The relationship between content area teachers and special educators in co-taught inclusion classes are a vivid example of

the professional collaboration needed to meet the needs of SHS students. However, it is difficult for teams of co-teachers to find time to collaboratively plan for instruction and assessment. The Shelton High School support services personnel interact and work cooperatively with professional staff members and agencies outside the school to enhance the opportunity for students to achieve the school's academic expectations for student learning. (students, school support staff, student/parent handbook, program of studies)

All SHS student support services and programs (health, special education, guidance, and library) do not have a standard, formal systematic method to evaluate and improve effectiveness in supporting student learning. The school improvement plan (SIP) is a new formal document to the school, and each department is required to connect its goals with the overall goals of the SIP. The process of determining these goals starts with department chairs meeting with their staff members and brainstorming ideas to better enhance their programs. Those ideas are then formed into goals by the department chairs and brought to leadership meetings where they are further discussed and then brought forward to the administration for review. There is no movement to standardize the method of reporting this information. SHS's support services and programs (health, special education, guidance, and library) work collaboratively toward evaluating and improving the effectiveness of their services but need to develop a formal method to measure effectiveness and plan for improvement. (department leaders, guidance and counseling goals report, library media specialist district media assessment)

A system is in place at SHS for effective and ongoing communication with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel. This system is designed to keep the school community informed about the types of available student support services and to address the physical, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of students. Information regarding student services can

be found on the SHS website, school calendar, student planners, and through various events including orientations, open houses, letters to parents and students, daily announcements, in-school posters, automated rapid-response phone-home messages, and the school newspaper. There are other ways to inform students through health classes, drug awareness programs, and special subject workshops and events. Through a variety of communication tools, all stakeholders have a clear sense of the available student services. (students, parents, facility tour)

At SHS, student records, including health and immunization records, are not used or maintained in a confidential manner consistent with federal and state law. In the health office, student records are stored in filing cabinets and locked daily. However, when health services staff members interview students and review their records, there is a breach of the level of confidentiality as a result of the high volume of students utilizing this support service. Physical constraints also contribute to the lack of confidentiality. Guidance files are located in each house and in the career center but are not locked. Special education files are located in the special education department and are also not secure due to an unrepaired broken lock. However, the door to the office is secured. Student confidentiality is compromised as a result of the type of storage and lack of security. (facility tour, self-study, support staff personnel)

There are insufficient certified/licensed personnel and support staff at SHS to provide effective counseling, health, special education, and library services. Financial reductions have resulted in the loss of one full-time guidance counselor position that created a gap in counseling support for the internal suspension program and increased the current student/counselor ratio from 226:1 to 252:1 with no change in the department chair ratio. A contracted, part-time, drug and alcohol counselor was also cut from the budget, creating a loss in an additional service that affected specific student services. The special education department lost the positions of inclusion

facilitator in addition to three full-time teachers. As a result, collaborative classes were cut in the social studies and science academic areas. In library/information services, two paraprofessionals and one secretary were eliminated, forcing the library to decrease its hours of operation and reducing the library media specialist's ability to adequately serve students and staff members. Reduction in staff in student service areas has had a profound effect on the school's ability to provide the proper services to students. (teachers, support staff personnel, substantive change letter to NEASC committee)

SHS provides a full range of comprehensive guidance services. Budget cuts have impeded the guidance department's ability to maintain all the services offered to students. Reduction in staff for this department equates to one full-time guidance counselor, one social worker, and a part-time drug and alcohol counselor. Yet, this department has been able to provide all previous services including guidance counselors who work with the all students throughout their four years at SHS on such projects including orientations, career decision-making and interest inventories, college options and essay writing, and PSAT score review. Continued services include Planned Parenthood, the Parent/Child Resource Center (PCRC), Adult Education, Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Naugatuck Valley Health District, and the Youth Service Bureau. Further success of the guidance department is confirmed by the Endicott Survey which shows that high percentages of students are satisfied with their counselors and seek them out once or twice a year. Parents are confident of the availability of their children's guidance counselors and believe that the needs of their children are being met. The guidance department at SHS adequately provides a full range of services to support the mission and expectations of the school. (support staff personnel, students, Endicott Survey, parents)

SHS's health services staff members offer a comprehensive range of preventive and direct intervention services. The two nurses conduct screenings for students and make referrals to physicians and parents when necessary. They work collaboratively with the special education staff on individual education plans (IEP) for students with special medical needs and attend PPT and 504 meetings. The health services staff follows specific protocols for emergency situations, and SHS has an emergency response team in place. The nurses keep a daily log of students' visits and lock all records at the end of the day. Those parents whose children have health issues that required them to miss school days are satisfied with the way that staff members helped their children's transition back to school. Although students report that they are comfortable with going to the nurses' office, the space limitations and layout of the office affects services to students because there is no private area for the nurses to consult with students or have a confidential conversation with parents. (nurses, parents, students, self-study)

The library/information services program and materials are not integrated into the SHS curriculum and instructional program. Time is allotted for collaborative planning among teachers twice a month, but teachers are not required to work with the library media specialist. Although over 56% of faculty members agrees that their curriculum includes information literacy skills, only about 30% confirms that they consult the library media specialist when developing or revising curriculum. Students will be unable to successfully fulfill the academic expectations unless information technology literacy skills are completely infused into the academic curriculum. (Endicott Survey, self-study, library media specialist)

The library media specialist at SHS does everything possible to learn about the curriculum of the school to support its implementation. She attends department meetings to inform teachers about materials and resources that support the curriculum. As the K-12 library media department chair

for the district, she has developed a district curriculum for Learning Resources and Instructional Technology (LRIT) which includes a curriculum for students at SHS to learn these 21st century skills. This leadership role also allows her to attend leadership meetings with other department chairs where academic curriculum is discussed. While the library media specialist makes herself available for some collaborating and co-teaching with teachers of some disciplines, her time is limited due to lack of support staff to attend to all other aspects of managing a library media center. (library media specialist, teacherS, self-study)

A wide range of materials, technologies and other library/information services that are responsive to SHS's student population are available to students and faculty members. In the past six years, the average age of the print collection has decreased from 1972 to 1984. The video and audio collection was replaced after a fire in 2008 destroyed those materials used to support the curriculum. The library budget was increased this past year, allowing the library media specialist to purchase up-to-date materials to support the curriculum. The library media specialist maintains the library website which links to the SHS Online Catalog of Print Resources as well as a variety of subscription databases and online resources to support teaching and learning. An orientation to library resources is provided for freshman through their English classes. The library media specialist informs staff members about new materials and resources through the headmaster's weekly newsletter, which is also available to parents and their children. Despite the availability of these varied resources, only about 34% of students reports that they use the library often during classes. Currently, there is no money in the budget for computer repair. Technology for individual classrooms such as Promethean boards, LCD projectors, and TV/DVD carts is inconsistent throughout academic departments and inadequate for teaching and learning at SHS. As a result, students are asked to meet academic learning expectations and prepare for life in a

complex, sophisticated, and ever-changing world without the benefit of technologically-rich learning environment. (self-study, Endicott Survey, library media specialist)

Due to budget cuts, students do not have access to the library before and after school. The library is open during the school day from 7:30 am - 3:00 pm, but since two paraprofessionals and one secretary were cut from the budget, the library media specialist cannot provide adequate support to faculty and staff members. From 2:00 – 3:00 pm, the library serves as the detention room, so students do not have access to the full range of library resources. Although there are seats for 30 students from study hall in a given period, the library is also expected to accommodate students from programs such as the Educational Center for the Arts and the Regional Center for the Arts on certain days. Teachers can sign up for one of the three computer labs in the library media center, and there are two spaces in the main library for classes to use print and online resources; however, the teachers' opportunity to collaborate with the library media specialist is severely limited. The lack of a library staff seriously impedes the school's progress towards its mission and academic expectations for student learning. (library media specialist, school resources committee, teachers)

The library/information services program at SHS fosters independent inquiry by enabling students and faculty members to use various school and community information resources and technologies. Over 65% of staff members reports that they use library resources to help prepare their classes. Students use the online resources on the library website independently to complete research tasks. The skills in the 9-12 Learning Resources and Instructional Technology (LRIT) curriculum need to be formally integrated into the curriculum documents of various content areas for all students to be able to have sufficient opportunities to practice independent inquiry skills. (self-study, Endicott Survey, students)

The library has a policy for the selection and removal of library materials that is available to the community through the library website. The citizen request for reconsideration of materials policy was revised and approved by the board of education in March of 2010. Parents and students review and sign the electronic information resources policy which clearly states district policies regarding the use of computer hardware and software, Internet safety, academic freedom, and copyright and plagiarism regulations. The library media specialist reviews these topics during freshman orientation. Through the implementation of the selection and removal of materials policy, the library media specialist has maintained a sufficient and current collection to be used to support the mission and expectations for student learning. (self-study, board of education documents, library media specialist)

The school provides special education services related to the identification, monitoring, and referral of its 120 students in accordance with local, state, and federal laws. At-risk students are identified, but, due to budget cuts, there are no resources in place to meet their needs. Parents report , however, that there has been sufficient communication with the teachers in referring their children for special education services. Although the transition coordinator position was eliminated, SHS has a strong transition program for students aged 18-21 who gain work experience in the community. Three teachers retired last year and were not replaced, thereby increasing the caseload of the current teachers. The elimination of the department secretary requires all special education teachers to schedule PPTs for their own students. There are collaborative classes in place for English and math courses, but social studies and science collaborative classes were cut from the budget. With the elimination of the general track in regular education, those special education students placed in the academic track need more paraprofessional support. Professional development for regular education teachers on

differentiating instruction is necessary in order to best meet the needs of special education students who have been put into their classes. (special education curriculum leader, parents, self-study)

Commendations

1. The dedicated faculty and staff who are committed to the success of their students despite severe reduction in the professional and support staff personnel in special education, guidance, and library/information services
2. The knowledgeable and respected library media specialist who is seen as a leader in the school community
3. The variety of print and online resources available to students through the library media center
4. The special education department's transition program
5. The quality of existing support services available to students who find themselves in need of assistance
6. The communication and mutual respect between the headmaster and the support services staff

Recommendations

1. Ensure that there is a plan in place for integrating technology in classrooms to maintain consistency across academic departments

2. Create safeguards for the achievement of learning expectations for special education students in science and social studies classes
3. Ensure the needs of students are being met in the areas of social work, prevention, and outreach to students
4. Integrate information and technology literacy skills into the curriculum of the school
5. Create an area that ensures confidentiality and private consultations between the nurses and students, parents, and staff
6. Provide professional development for regular education teachers on differentiating instruction for special education students
7. Ensure that resources are properly allocated to professional development in the core curriculum areas as it relates to collaborative teaching
8. Develop and implement a plan to formally assess the effectiveness of all student support services
9. Ensure the confidentiality of student records in the SHS Health Services, SHS Special Education, and SHS Guidance Departments
10. Create a more formal approach to reporting departmental goals and evaluating their effectiveness over the course of the academic year
11. Increase the hours and properly staff the SHS Library/Media Center to better serve the student population
12. Provide staff and resources in all student support areas to maintain a high quality delivery of services to the students and school community

SUPPORT STANDARD

Community Resources for Learning

Active community and parent participation, facilities which support school programs and services, and dependable and adequate funding are necessary for the school to achieve its mission and expectations for student learning.

1. The school shall engage students and families as partners in each students' education and shall encourage their participation in school programs and parent support groups.
2. The school shall foster productive business/community/higher education partnerships that support student learning.
3. The school site and plant shall support and enhance all aspects of the educational program and the support services for student learning.
4. The physical plant and facilities shall meet all applicable federal and state laws and shall be in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.
5. Equipment shall be adequate, properly maintained, catalogued, and replaced when appropriate.
6. A planned and adequately funded program of building and site management shall ensure the appropriate maintenance, repair, and cleanliness of the school plant.

7. There shall be ongoing planning to address future programs, enrollment changes, staffing, facility, and technology needs as well as capital improvements.
8. The community and the district's governing body shall ensure an adequate and dependable source of revenue to provide and maintain appropriate school programs, personnel, services, facilities, equipment, technological support, materials, and supplies for student learning.
9. Faculty and building administrators shall have active involvement in the budgetary process, including its development and implementation.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Conclusions

Shelton High School engages parents and families as partners in each student's education and encourages their participation in school programs and parent support groups. The school has a strong representation by the SHS Parent-Teacher-Student Organization (PTSO), which supports the overall success and participation of students in academic and social programs within the school. Volunteer parent organizations support extra-curricular activities including athletics, drama, and the band. Forty-nine percent of parents feels the school provides adequate opportunity for student progress. Parent contributions are viewed as extremely important in support of athletics and other extra curricular activities. Parents are invited to participate in the life of the school in a variety of settings and they feel they have ample opportunity to provide input. Despite cuts in the operating budget and as a result of the continuing effort of the parents,

students are provided with enhanced programs which allow all students the opportunity to participate. (Endicott Survey, parent panel interviews, school leaders, students, self-study)

Shelton High School fosters productive business/community/higher education partnerships that support student learning. Shelton High School provides opportunities for students to receive college credit through thirteen Advanced Placement courses, the Housatonic Community College (HCC) High School Partnership Program, Career Pathways (HCC), and the University of Connecticut's Early College Experience (ECE) courses. There is evidence of mentorships, job shadowing, field trips, workshops, work study programs, and internships which are available to all students. Students may take classes at the Educational Center for the Arts, the Regional Center for the Arts, and the Bridgeport Aquaculture Science and Technology Center. Special education students at Shelton High School have the opportunity to participate in work experience programs supported by twelve community partnerships which provide employment training for these students, e.g. Stockbridge's Cheesecakes, Griffin Hospital, and the Shelton Police Department. Annually, over 300 students participate in at least one of the partnership programs. The school provides an opportunity for all students to participate in educational programs and/or work experiences for high school credit beyond the traditional high school curriculum. (teachers, students, program of studies)

Shelton High School's site and plant support and enhance all aspects of the educational program and the support services for learning, but the high school's equipment, storage, technology, and the HVAC system do not. A twenty-five million dollar renovation project has created an

upgraded athletic facility housing a weight room, locker rooms, health and team meeting rooms, and athletic storage. Other improvements include science classrooms and additional classroom and office space on the first floor. Special education classroom space has been expanded for life skills, career explorations, and simulated work experiences. A new language lab and a remodeled auditorium as well as major reconstruction of the library media center have been completed. Storage is a major issue at Shelton High School. The drama department props for plays and productions usually end up being thrown out as a result of blocking hallways as the school has no storage. As a consequence, these materials need to be re-purchased for the next school year. Folding tables and other portable equipment are stored in the maintenance area in the open and can easily be damaged or stolen. There is no suitable storage for all equipment throughout the building. The HVAC system is inconsistent and inefficient; faculty and students widely regard classrooms and workspaces as either too cold or too hot, and the system is extremely noisy, making it very difficult for students and teachers to be heard. The HVAC system is computer-controlled, and the custodians have not been adequately trained to successfully monitor the system. The facility supports the educational programs, but the lack of technology and proper storage hinder the efforts to help students achieve learning expectations. (teachers, inventory, self-study, Endicott Survey)

Shelton High School meets all applicable federal and state laws and is in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations. The entire facility is accessible to the handicapped. Although the district is waiting for the contractor's report, the school has received its certificate of occupancy. The building is inspected for compliance with the fire codes semi-annually. Although there are three significant code violations currently pending (installation of sprinklers in

technology classes, maintenance shops, and painting areas; windows for rescue; and replacement/repair of exit stairs and doors), documentation at the central office gives occupancy to the school. Fire watches are continuously monitored by custodial, security, and administrative staff members. The school is in compliance with federal and state guidelines, but pending fire code violations present safety issues and concerns for students and staff members. (maintenance personnel, self-study, fire inspection report)

Equipment at Shelton High School is properly maintained and cataloged, but it is not adequate nor replaced when appropriate. Currently, there is no formal plan to replace old furniture and equipment. The library media specialist, in conjunction with the technology staff, coordinates and maintains audio-visual equipment and computers. The library media specialist is the first person contacted by the staff when in need of assistance or potential repair. Teachers also use the help desk for technology support. The help desk is an e-mail or call system where a ticket is submitted for a request with the response prioritized by the technology specialist. Rather than serving as a resource for curriculum, instruction, and assessment the library media specialist has become a facilities manager. Destiny, a cataloging program, is used to maintain and keep track of inventory (Scantrons, overheads, etc.). For the most part, equipment is in proper working condition. However, the long-term technology plan has not been able to keep up with the technology demands. The lack of library personnel and absence of a formal and implemented replacement schedule have a negative impact on curriculum and equipment for students. (library media specialist, teachers, self-study)

Shelton High School does not have a planned and adequately funded program of building and site management and does not ensure the appropriate maintenance, repair, and cleanliness of the school plant. The maintenance of the equipment is the responsibility of one member of the custodial staff. The custodial staff reports that more money is spent on repairs than on acquisitions. Each custodian must cover an area of over 30,000 square feet. The industry standard suggests a coverage area of no more than 18,000 square feet. The custodial staff does have a daily cleaning schedule, but, as reported by students and faculty members, the facility is not adequately maintained at an appropriate standard of cleanliness. The students independently surveyed their peers on the condition of the bathrooms, and the results indicate that there are many concerns regarding the overall maintenance of the bathrooms. School Dude is an online request for repair service utilized by the staff when concerns arise about instructional and non-instructional equipment. Service to this equipment has been inconsistent, resulting in a delay in maintaining the necessary equipment and cleanliness of the building. Much of the equipment throughout the building is in proper working order, however, and despite the cuts in the budget over several years, the maintenance staff does what it can with what it has. The lack of cleanliness of the building has had a negative impact on the morale of the students and staff members at Shelton High School. (student surveys, teachers, facilities tour)

Shelton High School does not have an ongoing plan to adequately and dependably address programs, staffing, facility, or technology needs. There is no long-range plan, but there is a system of data management which helps forecast student enrollment. That data is not used for multiple year planning, however. Shelton High School has a five-year technology plan as well. The impact of the budget cuts has severely affected the long-range goals of this plan. The

headmaster was able to fund a world language lab that runs the Rosetta Stone program. Students entering the high school have had the advantage of using up-to-date technology at the intermediate school. Budget cuts have taken away the opportunity to use this same technology when they enter the high school; therefore, they are not being adequately prepared for the challenges beyond high school. The lack of multiple year plans and failure to appropriately fund technology has had a negative impact on programming and student learning. (headmaster, self-study, Five-Year Technology Plan)

Shelton High School does not address future programs, staffing, facility, and technology needs. Severe budget cuts over several years have had a negative impact on sufficient funding for the following: appropriate school programs and services, maintaining adequate staffing, providing adequate instructional materials including technology and supplies, and maintaining appropriate facilities and equipment. Budget cuts during the 2010-2011 school year resulted in the implementation of a “pay to participate” initiative. Students involved in any extra-curricular activity (including athletics and band) now have to pay a participation fee ranging from \$100 to \$400 with a maximum of \$750 for participation. To date, the “pay to participate” initiative has created a minimal decrease in participation. The school will not be able to determine the full impact on “pay to participate” until the spring season participation numbers are available. As a result of multiple years of budget reductions, the school is not in a position to provide students with an education which will prepare them for the 21st Century. The headmaster perfunctorily presents her budget to the superintendent. The district budget is then presented to the board of alderman and the mayor. This is where the ultimate decision is made regarding the approval of funding for the school district. Shelton High School suffers from a lack of funding which

ultimately impacts programs, personnel, services, facilities, equipment, technology, support, materials, and supplies for student learning. (self-study, superintendent, headmaster, teachers)

The Shelton High School faculty and administration do not have an active involvement in the budgetary process, including its development and implementation. Little input is sought in budget development by the superintendent from the high school headmaster and faculty. The lack of building input in the budget process means there is little chance resources are being directed in a way in which to maximize student achievement of learning expectations.

(headmaster, self-study, teachers)

Commendations

1. The active support and promotion of parents for the programs of the school
2. The efforts of Shelton High School to involve members of the business community / higher education partnerships in support of student learning
3. The redesign and acquisition of locker rooms, storage for physical education and athletics, trainer's room, team room, and weight room
4. The installation of a world language lab with updated technology
5. Maintaining student participation in extra-curricular activities and athletics despite recently implementing a pay-to-pay system

Recommendations

1. Address immediately the three remaining code violations cited by the fire marshal
2. Implement a plan for a formal system to properly maintain, catalog, and replace equipment
3. Provide adequate funding for maintenance, repair, and cleaning of the building
4. Provide adequate and reliable funding in order to maintain appropriate school programs, personnel, services, facilities, equipment, technological support, materials, and supplies for student learning, and capital improvements
5. Develop and implement a plan to address the inefficiencies of the HVAC system
6. Initiate a plan to revise the five-year long-range plan for staffing, facilities, and capital improvements
7. Implement plans for faculty and administrative input into the budgetary process
8. Track the rate of participation in extracurricular activities and athletics to study the long-term effects of the pay-to-play system

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 Shelton High 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 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 of Shelton High School submit 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 CPSS Standards. The Commission's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix on page 74. 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 visiting committee 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.

In conclusion, the visiting committee expresses its appreciation for the excellent cooperation that it received from all levels of the school and school district staff in Shelton and for the genuine hospitality and courtesy extended by the Shelton school community during the entire visit. In particular, the visiting committee commends the faculty of Shelton High School for the excellent quality of its self-study as well as the helpful collection of student work made in preparation for the school evaluation visit. The committee wishes Shelton High School success in all its future educational endeavors.

**New England Association of Schools & Colleges
Shelton High School**

November 14-17, 2010

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NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

Commission on Public Secondary Schools

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

Principals of member schools must report to the Commission within sixty (60) days of occurrence of 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

- 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
- 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
- identification by the state as an underperforming school
- takeover by the state
- inordinate user fees