New England Association of School and Colleges, Inc.

Commission on Public Schools

Committee on Public Secondary Schools

Report of the Visiting Team for Westbrook High School

Westbrook, CT

October 15, 2017 - October 18, 2017

Cathy Sosnowski, Chair
Dr. Erin McGurk, Assistant Chair
Tara Winch, Principal

STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

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

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

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

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

Teaching and Learning Standards

Core Values and Beliefs About Learning

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of and for Student Learning

Support Standards

School Culture and Leadership

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning

CORE VALUES, BELIEFS, AND LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Teaching and Learning Standard

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

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

CURRICULUM

Teaching and Learning Standard

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

1. The curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

2. The curriculum is written in a common format that includes:
   - units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills
   - the school's 21st century learning expectations
   - instructional strategies
   - assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success, school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics.

3. The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through:
   - inquiry and problem-solving
   - higher order thinking
   - cross-disciplinary learning
   - authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school
   - informed and ethical use of technology.

4. There is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum.

5. Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.

6. Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.

7. The district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research.

INSTRUCTION

Teaching and Learning Standard

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

1. Teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.

2. Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by:
   - personalizing instruction
   - engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning
   - engaging students as active and self-directed learners
   - emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking
   - applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks
   - engaging students in self-assessment and reflection
   - integrating technology.

3. Teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by:
   - using formative assessment, especially during instructional time
   - strategically differentiating
   - purposefully organizing group learning activities
   - providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom.

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

5. Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices.

ASSESSMENT OF AND FOR STUDENT LEARNING

Teaching and Learning Standard

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

1. The professional staff continuously employs a formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics

2. The school's professional staff communicates:
   ○ individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families
   ○ the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community.

3. Professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.

4. Prior to each unit of study, teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed.

5. Prior to summative assessments, teachers provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success, such as corresponding rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement.

6. In each unit of study, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.

7. Teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments.

8. Teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.

9. Teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.

10. Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, including all of the following:
    ○ student work
    ○ common course and common grade-level assessments
    ○ individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations
    ○ standardized assessments
    ○ data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions
    ○ survey data from current students and alumni.

11. Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's

core values and beliefs about learning.

SCHOOL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

Support Standard

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

1. The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.

2. The school is equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

3. There is a formal, on-going program(s) or process(es) through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

4. In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff:
   - engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning
   - use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices
   - dedicate formal time to implement professional development
   - apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

5. School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning.

6. The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.

7. Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students.

8. The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.

9. Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.

10. Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning.

11. The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

12. The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school.

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Support Standard

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

1. The school has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

2. The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services.

3. Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.

4. School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
   ○ deliver a written, developmental program
   ○ meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling
   ○ engage in individual and group meetings with all students
   ○ deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers
   ○ use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

5. The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
   ○ provide preventative health services and direct intervention services
   ○ use an appropriate referral process
   ○ conduct ongoing student health assessments
   ○ use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

6. Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
   ○ are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum
   ○ provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum
   ○ ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school
   ○ are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning
   ○ conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

7. Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
   ○ collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations
   ○ provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students

- perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Support Standard

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

1. The community and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for:
   - a wide range of school programs and services
   - sufficient professional and support staff
   - ongoing professional development and curriculum revision
   - a full range of technology support
   - sufficient equipment
   - sufficient instructional materials and supplies.

2. The school develops, plans, and funds programs:
   - to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant
   - to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment
   - to keep the school clean on a daily basis.

3. The community funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses:
   - programs and services
   - enrollment changes and staffing needs
   - facility needs
   - technology
   - capital improvements.

4. Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget.

5. The school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services.

6. The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.

7. All professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school.

8. The school develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning.

School and Community Summary

School and Community Summary

Westbrook, Connecticut is a suburban town of approximately 7,000 residents located halfway between New Haven and New London in Middlesex County on the Long Island Sound. Originally part of Saybrook Colony, it was known as Pochaug until 1810, and was incorporated as a town in 1840. Westbrook has a total area of 21.4 square miles, of which, 15.7 square miles is land and 5.7 square miles (26.47%) is water.

According to the most recent census, 2,605 households and 1,693 families reside in the town. The population density was 400.3 people per square mile. There were 3,460 housing units at an average density of 220.1 per square mile. The racial makeup of the district is 84.3% White, 10.8% Hispanic or Latino, 0.11% Pacific Islander, and 3.1% from two or more races.

There were 2,605 households from which 26.5% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 54.1% were married couples living together, 7.8% had a female householder with no husband present, and 35.0% were non-families. 28.0% of all households were made up of individuals and 12.7% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.39 and the average family size was 2.93. According to the CT Data Collaborative Report, Westbrook's population is projected to grow approximately 1.0% by 2020.

The age of the town population was distributed as follows: 21.8% under the age of 18, 5.2% from 18 to 24, 29.2% from 25 to 44, 26.7% from 45 to 64, and 17.1% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 42 years. The ratio of females to males was as follows: for every 100 females there were 95.8 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 92.7 males. The median income for a household in the town was $57,531, and the median income for a family was $71,344. Males had a median income of $46,889 versus $32,227 for females. The per capita income for the town was $28,680. About 2.7% of families and 5.2% of the population were below the poverty line, including 3.7% of those under age 18 and 8.1% of those ages 65 or over. Fifteen percent of Westbrook students are eligible for free or reduced lunch.

The town's public education needs are overseen by its local school district. The Westbrook Public Schools include Daisy Ingraham Elementary School, Westbrook Middle School, and Westbrook High School. Oxford Academy, an all boys' private high school, is also located in Westbrook. Westbrook High School had a population of 287, per the 2015-2016 School Profile and Performance Report.

Westbrook has demonstrated a strong commitment to education through its emphasis on student achievement, improved school facilities, and parent involvement. In recent years, Westbrook has seen physical renovations to Daisy Ingraham and Westbrook High School including security upgrades, new shatter-proof windows, new carpeting, and a resurfaced parking area. In 2015-2016, the district spent $101,991 on capital improvements to the high school (i.e., security improvements, tennis court repairs, and auditorium assessment). The district has also continuously updated student and teacher access to technology including updated SMART Boards, Google Chromebooks, and improved wireless capacity.

The high school grade range is nine through twelve. In 2015-2016, Westbrook Public Schools received 4.3% of the funding from the state or federal government, the rest, 95.7% came from property taxes. The Westbrook School District spends $20,257 per pupil in current expenditures. The district spends 87.69% on instruction and 12.31% on support services. 66.53% is spent on pre-k through grade 8 and 33.47% is spent on grades 9-12. The Westbrook School District has 7.8 students for every full-time equivalent teacher, with the CT State average being 10.2 students per full-time equivalent teacher. In the Westbrook School District, 15% of students have an IEP (Individualized Education Program). The Westbrook School District serves 8.7% English language learners (ELL). The daily attendance rate for the 2016-2017 school year was 90.27%.

Westbrook High School is a four-year comprehensive school, accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, offering curricular and co-curricular programs to 287 students. 94.8% of Westbrook High School students were enrolled in college or career readiness classes. The school has a partnership with the

University of Connecticut, offering UConn credit for six classes: Biology, English, Physics, Individual Family Development, Spanish and French. Westbrook High School also offers the following AP classes: Psychology, US History, European History, Statistics, and Calculus. Westbrook's four-year cohort graduation rate of 2013-2014 was 95.0% compared to Connecticut's graduation rate of 87%. According to the School Profile and Performance Report, 85.7% of females entered into a four-year college and 83.8% of those persisted. 77.5% of males entered into a four-year college and 85% of those persisted.

Westbrook High School values recognizing student achievements through a variety of avenues. The Old Saybrook/Westbrook Rotary Club recognizes a student of the month for a different academic discipline each month. Shoreline schools also recognize outstanding achievement in math and social studies annually. Westbrook holds annual academic awards for both underclassmen and seniors, recognizing outstanding achievement, effort, and improvement. Graduating seniors are recognized through a variety of local scholarships, including approximately $90,000 per year through the Westbrook Foundation. Athletic achievements are celebrated at the end of each season with sports awards, and Westbrook's theater department is recognized annually through the Halo awards, a Connecticut high school theatre recognition program.

At Westbrook High School, there is one full-time administrator, one athletic director, nine paraprofessionals, one time-shared nurse, one time-shared nurse's assistant, three administrative assistants, ten support staff, five full-time custodians, and three food service personnel. Westbrook High School has two full-time campus monitors. The faculty consists of 34 members, 31 (91%) of whom hold advanced degrees. The average number of FTE Days absent due to illness or personal time was 7.5 for Westbrook High School and 11.5 for the district.

In the spring of 2013, Westbrook High School reached out to local businesses, clergy, and community leaders with a community climate survey revealing a desire for increased connection between the town community and the high school. Since that time, multiple school and business partnerships have been formed, including the Westbrook Elks Club, the Seaside Beach Association, Silver Trails Pet Boarding and Grooming, Wilcox Fuel, Westbrook Salon, Pilot's Point Marina, Cuckoo's Nest Restaurant and Ed's Place Restaurant. Since 2014, students have been employed in these local businesses through a summer work grant through the Connecticut Department of Labor called the Connecticut Youth Employment Program, and many of these initial contacts have expanded into internships, long term employment opportunities, and volunteer work. Students have also been placed in local businesses through the Connecticut Department of Education Internship Program. Westbrook also has a partnership available to all residents with the Workforce Alliance of New Haven to assist with resume writing, interview skills, and job placement. The community also has access to Middletown Adult Education for literacy programs and GED work for anyone over the age of 20. Public partnerships include school custodial staff, school IT and Westbrook Youth and Family Services.

Additionally, Westbrook has become a national leader in the field of school climate through Westbrook High School's affiliation with the National School Climate Center, the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, and CDSE Commission on Children "Summit on Youth Leadership to Improve School Climate." Beginning in December 2014, Westbrook High School Teen Leadership students were asked by the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) to participate in a School Climate Leadership presentation entitled "Student Centered Approaches to Improving School Climate On and Offline." In January 2015, the WHS Teen Leadership group participated in the "Youth Leadership Summit," which was a conference run by the CIAC (Connecticut) Unified Sports Program in conjunction with the Special Olympics and a federal grant called Project Unify. In October 2015, students from Westbrook High School Teen Leadership attended and presented at Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence's presentation of Lady Gaga's *Born This Way Foundation*: "Emotional Revolution" aimed at shifting school climate practices nationally. In December 2015, Westbrook students presented at the state Capitol in Hartford to state legislators on biases in legislation in conjunction with Steve Fernandes, head of the State's Commission on Children. In January 2016, Westbrook Teen Leadership facilitated the CAS's Conference on Elementary Leadership. In October 2016, Westbrook High School became one of ten schools in the nation to receive the Facebook's Changemaker Award, as well as Middlesex County's Community Foundation Agent of Change Award. In December 2016, Westbrook hosted a student school climate training that eight state schools attended. Westbrook continues to collaborate on projects with the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence.

Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations

Westbrook High School

Educate. Challenge. Inspire.

<u>Core Values</u>

Westbrook High School is committed to educating all students to achieve their unique potential as 21st century learners. Faculty and staff value collaboration and reflection in order to provide instruction that engages all students in an equitable learning environment.

<u>Beliefs</u>

Westbrook High School believes that students learn best when they are actively engaged in their learning experiences and encouraged by a safe, supportive school climate that nurtures social connections, emotional well-being, academic skills, and personal integrity.

<u>Learning Expectations</u>

Academic

1. Read a wide variety of texts effectively
2. Write effectively for a variety of purposes
3. Present ideas accurately with the support of engaging media
4. Think critically to solve problems and reach well-reasoned judgments
5. Work responsibly and collaboratively

Social

6. Develop a spirit of belonging

Civic

7. Contribute to a positive school climate by actively participating in the school community and respecting others

Introduction

Introduction

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

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

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

Teaching and Learning Standards

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of and for Student Learning

Support of Teaching and Learning Standards

School Culture and Leadership

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning

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

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Study

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Westbrook High School, a committee of 40 members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people. In addition to faculty members, the self-study committees included the business manager, the facilities manager, the athletic director, ten parents, fourteen students, three community members and three members of the school board.

The self-study of Westbrook HighSchool extended over a period of 50 school months from October 2011 to

September 2017 . The visiting team was pleased to note that three community members and three school board members joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

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

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Team

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

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

- review of the school's self-study materials

- 7 hours shadowing 7 students for a half day

- a total of 18 hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)

- numerous informal observations in and around the school

- tours of the facility

- individual meetings with 24 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning

- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers

Each conclusion in the report was agreed to by visiting team consensus. Sources of evidence for each conclusion drawn by the visiting team are included with each Indicator in the Standards sections of the report. The seven Standards for Accreditation reports include commendations and recommendations that in the visiting team's judgment will be helpful to the school as it works to improve teaching and learning and to better align with Committee Standards.

This report of the findings of the visiting team will be forwarded to the Committee on Public Secondary Schools which will make a decision on the accreditation of Westbrook High School.

Standard 1 Indicator 1

Conclusions

Westbrook High School (WHS) engages in a collaborative, inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning. During the 2011-2012 school year, the WHS faculty focused on the review and development of its core values and beliefs. A team of teachers and administrators attended a NEASC Accreditation Workshop, where they gathered resources including "21st Century Skills" (Metiri Group), "Cognitive Strategies in the Common Core State Standards," "Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campus," and "Comparison of Teacher-Centered and Learner-Centered Paradigms" (Huba & Freed, 2000). This team also obtained examples of rubrics and learning expectations from other high schools. Using community survey results and principles from research-based texts (Marzano's *The Highly Engaged Classroom*; *The Core Six: Essential Strategies for Achieving Excellence (*Silver, Dewing, & Perini); and *Common Core Standards for High School* (Ryan & Frazee), the faculty concluded that the school mission statement needed to be streamlined so that the core values and beliefs could be more readily assimilated into the school culture and so that the faculty could more clearly track the progress of each student toward achieving 21st century learning expectations. The faculty and school principal also worked with a local consultant who has experience in this process.

The revision of the former mission statement began with a full faculty session to generate input on the core values and beliefs, a process they believed to be paramount to supporting all students' achievement of the school's learning expectations. A steering committee was formed and met through the spring semester to conduct further inquiry and to create a new draft of the core values and beliefs. This committee included stakeholders from all areas of the school community, including the WHS principal, teachers, parents, a student representative, and a member of the board of education. The draft was reviewed and adopted by faculty in June 2013 and was presented to the PTSO, the board of education, and the community at large to solicit feedback in June 2013.

After adoption of the core values and beliefs, the faculty created 21st century academic learning expectations that would align closely with the Common Core Standards. The school's approved core values and beliefs and learning expectations are separate but related documents. The core values and beliefs focus on the faculty's commitment to collaboration and reflection and the district's emphasis on creating and sustaining positive school climate. The WHS 21st century academic learning expectations were based on demands of the Common Core, particularly *The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects,* which are "shared responsibility within the school" (National Governors' Association Center for Best Practices). Based on community feedback and the district-wide initiative to train and certify all staff members, as well as a major portion of the student body, in school climate practices, the core values and beliefs and 21st century learning expectations were further edited by the NEASC core values standard subcommittee in March 2015, to include social and civic expectations. These latest revisions were adopted by the full faculty in October 2016, and by the board of education in May 2017. Based on 2015-2016 Endicott survey results, 79 percent of students and 85 percent of parents are familiar with Westbrook High School's core values and beliefs about learning. In addition, 81 percent of parents report that they are familiar with 21st century learning expectations, and 80 percent recognize that core values and beliefs represent community values about student learning. Faculty express confidence that the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations are highly reflective of the school culture. Because Westbrook High School engaged in a dynamic, inclusive process, the school community has committed to its core values and beliefs statement.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- panel presentation

- teachers
- students
- school board
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Indicator 2

Conclusions

Westbrook High School is working toward implementation of challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies, and are defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted high levels of achievement.

Westbrook High School has identified seven challenging academic, civic, and social learning expectations and created analytic rubrics to identify mastery of skills. The learning expectations are measured with school-wide analytic rubrics that indicate targeted levels of achievement designed to ensure that students possess the skills and abilities necessary for success at Westbrook High School and beyond so they become lifelong learners who will contribute collaboratively, independently, and creatively to an ever-changing global community. Endicott survey results indicate that 64 percent of Westbrook High School students, 80 percent of faculty, and 71 percent of parents feel that the learning expectations are challenging and measurable.

The learning expectations are broken down into academic, social, and civic expectations. The academic expectations are aligned with the Common Core Standards to ensure a rigorous academic standard and the civic and social expectations are derived from the district's dedication to creating and sustaining a positive school climate. School-wide academic rubrics address reading, writing, speaking and presenting, critical thinking and reasoning, and working responsibly. Each department is assigned two school-wide rubrics to use when assessing the performance tasks (unit summative assessments) outlined in the formal curriculum. Teachers can also use additional school-wide rubrics when appropriate.

Before the 2016-2017 school year, data collected from school-wide rubrics was not consistently recorded. In some years, student scores were posted in PowerSchool, but the data was not shared across departments or clearly communicated to parents. To ensure that students are making progress towards achieving the learning expectations, the high school adopted an electronic portfolio system during the 2016-2017 school year that allows students to upload work connected to school-wide rubrics. Every student is in the process of creating an electronic portfolio that will help track student progress and growth in these areas. In May 2017, the board of education adopted the electronic portfolio as a graduation requirement. Over the course of four years, students are required to upload the following summative assessments: three assessments connected to each of the school-wide rubrics for reading, for writing, and for speaking and presenting, and two assessments connected to each of the school-wide rubrics for critical thinking and reasoning and for working responsibly. Students described having broad choice about the assessments that they upload. In general, they expressed that written work is uploaded easily.

Every third advisory session is dedicated to digital portfolio development. Depending on the specific focus for the lesson, students may sort through their graded papers and projects, upload graded assessments connected to a school-wide grading rubric, or reflect on their progress toward achieving the 21st century learning expectations. Twice a year, students are required to submit a checklist outlining their progress toward portfolio requirements for the school year. Advisors are expected to review the student checklists to ensure that students are uploading the required documents. Faculty reported that, at this time, there is no formal recording of student achievement/performance on the school-wide rubrics over time, making it difficult to monitor student growth based on the scores from the school-wide grading rubrics, or to adjust instruction to ensure that students are reaching the expectations. During second semester of senior year, students are expected to present their completed portfolios to their advisory group and explain how they made progress toward achieving the 21st century learning expectations throughout their high school career.

When teachers develop more clarity about the connection between the 21st century learning expectations identified in the school-wide rubrics and their instructional practices, they will be able to expand the opportunities for all students to practice and achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- students
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Westbrook High School's recently revised core values and beliefs reflect the culture of the school, but the 21st century learning expectations do not yet drive curriculum, instruction and assessment revision in every classroom, nor guide the school's, policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations.

The culture of WHS reflects a vigorous commitment to establishing and maintaining a safe, supportive school climate that nurtures emotional well-being, academic skills, and personal integrity. The 21st century learning expectations are reflected in revised curricula and in some aspects of daily instruction. The core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations appear on the school's website, in student handbooks and are posted throughout the school. According to the Endicott survey, 91.4 percent of students say they are familiar with the school's learning expectations. Also, 92.5 percent of staff say that the school's core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations are clear to them, while 79.7 percent of parents say that the learning expectations are clear. In a community meeting facilitated by the NEASC core values subcommitteein December 2016, attended by parents, students, and board of education members, all stakeholders agreed that the current core values and beliefs were a very accurate reflection of Westbrook High School true spirit. They agreed that Westbrook High School's focus on inclusion and climate were strong points of the community that were well reflected in the wording of Westbrook High School's core values and beliefs. They also agree that the 21st century learning expectations were clear, intuitive, and appropriate.

During the 2016-2017 school year, student advisory groups developed ideas for mnemonic acronyms based on the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. The advisory groups reviewed current documents of core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, highlighted key ideas and terms they wanted to see emphasized in the school motto and developed acronyms based on those key ideas. Faculty and staff reviewed student suggestions and voted to narrow the field down to three finalists: Knights' CREST (Collaboration, Reflection, Engagement, School Climate, Thinking Critically), Westbrook SPIRIT (Support, Positivity, Individuality, Reflection, Integrity, Thinking Critically), and WHS (Working Together, Honing Critical Thinking, Supporting School Climate). Students and faculty chose the final, winning acronym, SPIRIT, in February 2017 as part of that day's advisory agenda. To further engage and promote ownership of core values and beliefs, the advisory committee sponsored a contest to develop a visual representation of the motto.

The 21st century learning expectations are referenced in curriculum documents. Each department in the high school has worked with the district's lead curriculum teacher to ensure that the learning expectations are explicitly indicated in each unit of study. In addition, the learning expectations are posted in each classroom. Each department is responsible for using the school-wide rubrics to assess student skills. In advisory groups, students upload examples of their work with corrected rubrics to their personal portfolios. At the end of the year, they reflect on the progress they have made in regard to 21st century learning expectations and set goals for growth.

Westbrook has become a national leader in the field of school climate through an affiliation with the National School Climate Center. The district has committed resources to support this effort, as each staff member and many students have been trained in basic school climate principles. Many staff members have also received advanced training in school climate and restorative practices.

Student representatives of WHS Teen Leadership have participated in a variety of climate initiatives since 2014. In October 2014, students participated in the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and Ct. State Department of Education Commission (CSDE) on Children "Summit on Youth Leadership to Improve School Climate." In December 2014, WHS Teen Leadership students were asked by the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) to participate in a School Climate Leadership presentation entitled "Student Centered Approaches to Improving School Climate On and Offline." In October 2015, students from WHS Teen Leadership attended and presented at Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence's presentation of Lady Gaga's *Born This Way Foundation*. In October 2016, WHS became one of ten schools in the nation to receive the Facebook's Changemaker Award, as well as

Middlesex County's Community Foundation Agent of Change Award. In December 2016, Westbrook hosted a student school climate training that eight state schools attended. Westbrook continues to collaborate on projects with the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence.

Once there is a deeper, consistent application and monitoring of student achievement of the 21st century learning expectations at WHS, faculty and administrators will reflect a commitment to use the data on student achievement of the learning expectations to drive curriculum, instruction, assessment, policies, procedures, and decision making.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teachers
- community members
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Westbrook High School (WHS) does not currently have an established process to regularly review and revise its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, and district and school community priorities. Although WHS has engaged in a process that has spanned several years to develop, revise, and implement core values and beliefs and 21st century learning expectations that reflect school culture and district and community priorities, there is not yet a systematic process in place for regular review, and the school does not yet examine multiple data sources to ensure the continuing rigor of its self-evaluation.

Since 2007, the faculty engaged in a process to review and revise the school's mission and learning expectations. Over a period of years, work was done to develop school-wide rubrics, to integrate their use into classroom practice, and to develop a system to monitor student achievement of the expectations and report on progress to parents through the school's online grading system. Faculty report that there were issues in communication and the collection of data was not always meaningful or communicated to parents clearly. In 2011, work began on identifying core values and beliefs and the faculty identified the need to streamline the wording to make it easier to communicate the ideas to students, parents and the community. During the same school year, initial work was done to identify and develop understandings that would form the basis of the 21st century learning expectations. Over the next several years, drafts continued to be shared and revisions made.

In 2015, as a result of new district work on school climate, the 21st century learning expectations were revised to include social and civic expectations, and the following fall, in October 2016, the latest revisions of the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations were adopted by the full faculty. The committee also created a plan to recruit students to design an acronym to help students synthesize and retain the main ideas of the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Students and faculty choose the final, winning acronym (SPIRIT) in May 2017. The same month, the board of education approved the most recent draft of Westbrook High School's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, and, in June 2017, voted to make digital portfolios a graduation requirement beginning with the Class of 2019. At this time, there is no systematic way in which student achievement of the 21st century learning expectations is monitored, communicated to parents, or analyzed to consider possible changes to curriculum, instruction, or assessment.

When the school conducts a review of core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations on a regular basis, using current research and multiple data sources, the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations will become increasingly meaningful and relevant to teachers, students, and parents.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Commendations

Commendation

The learning expectations that encompass academic, social and civic competencies and reflect the culture of the school

Commendation

The focus on developing a sense of belonging that reflects the district commitment to school climate

Commendation

The dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process of developing core values and beliefs that encompass shared community priorities about learning

Commendation

The collaborative development of an acronym for the school's core values that is embraced by students, staff, and the community

Commendation

The use of current research when identifying and committing to the school's core values and beliefs about learning

Standard 1 Recommendations

Recommendation

Fully implement school-wide rubrics for the 21st century learning expectations to measure student progress toward meeting the school's academic, social, and civic competencies

Recommendation

Ensure that the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations drive decisions about curriculum, instruction, and assessment

Recommendation

Regularly review and revise the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations using multiple data sources to ensure that the learning expectations remain current and relevant

Standard 2 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The curriculum is mostly designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century academic learning expectations. The School Wide-Rubric Implementation by Department document identifies two academic learning expectations that all departments, including the library, are responsible for. The only exception to this is the special education department. Each academic learning expectation is covered in at least one other content area. According to the Endicott survey 80 percent of staff and 83.8 percent of parents agree that the formal curriculum is designed to help students achieve the school's learning expectations.

Students are uploading evidence of their growth toward the 21st century academic learning expectations into an electronic portfolio. As of now there is no vehicle to collect and review data regarding the school's learning expectations to make decisions about adding or deleting courses or units from the curriculum. Existing curriculum documents identify by unit which specific learning expectations are being addressed. However, the connection between course content and the learning expectation is less than clear. While units in the curriculum documents have academic learning expectations to be addressed identified, there is no direct, explicit indication for how that will be accomplished. Teachers indicated that students have multiple opportunities each semester to practice the learning expectations and all teachers had a clear understanding which academic learning expectations they are responsible for.

The social and civic learning expectations are monitored less formally through advisory which services all students. In addition, some students elect to take the Teen Leadership class. Currently, a third of the student body has been trained in the school climate initiative and students from Teen Leadership work with incoming freshmen and transfer students to get them up to speed on this initiative. When there is a clearer connection between course content and the learning expectations as well as a more formal process to monitor student progress toward the social and civic learning expectations, Westbrook High School can ensure all students practice and achieve all 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The curriculum template contains standards, concepts, skills, essential questions, big ideas, instructional strategies, and assessments. It also includes a section for interdisciplinary/global connections, anticipated misconceptions, and differentiation. Newly revised units also include a performance task. While each unit has academic learning expectations identified, they have not yet incorporated the social and civic learning expectations. Each unit does contain suggested instructional strategies. There are analytic rubrics as well as department rubrics that are used to measure student success. The initial template was set ten years ago. The curriculum lead teacher has worked with the professional learning community (PLC) leaders to revise the template to accommodate new standards such as Common Core, C3 Frameworks for Social Studies, and Next Generation Science Standards. All curriculums are revised using this common template, including vocational and technical courses. There is a range of instructional strategies included in the curriculum units. Teachers noted this is a fluid document and they can add new strategies as they find them. Assessments are scored using a combination of the analytic rubrics, department rubrics, and course-specific rubrics, with the department and course-specific rubrics affording the most measurable criteria. Because Westbrook High School uses a common curriculum format, it ensures all students experience a guaranteed curricular experience and have equal opportunities to access the learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 3

Conclusions

There are structures in place to ensure the curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding through inquiry, problem solving and higher order thinking skills in all courses and levels; some authentic learning and informed use of technology; although there are no formal opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning.

The Endicott survey cites 81 percent of students agree that course content challenges them to think critically and solve problems. Performance tasks offer the clearest evidence of higher order thinking skills. For instance, a performance task in Discrete Math has a sample electoral college table with four fictitious states and candidates A and B. While the first prompt is low level (i.e., Who would win?), the other prompts require students to manipulate the data to create a weighted voting system to calculate a Banzhaf power index. In World Cultures II, students respond to a document-based question (DBQ) performance task using ten documents from the Renaissance such as *Hamlet*, Erasmus' *On the Art of Learning*, and Luther's *95 Theses* to respond to the question: "How did the Renaissance revolutionize European art, society, and beliefs?"

What cross-disciplinary opportunities exist are done informally rather than as a more formal curriculum requirement. The art teacher worked with a freshman English teacher to create Venetian masks for *Romeo and Juliet*. The art teacher has also worked with a math teacher on a gridding assignment. The English as second language teacher worked with the personal finance teacher to create a future career presentation. There is also collaboration between social studies and English. According to the Endicott survey 65.4 percent of students agree that information from one class could be used in another class. In addition, teachers have identified that having more formal curriculum collaboration is an area for growth.

Students have opportunities for authentic learning opportunities both in and out of the school. Through the Teen Leadership class, students work with younger students in the middle school as well as incoming ninth graders to teach about school climate. Students also have conducted town surveys and presented the results to the superintendent and to the BOE. Students in Life Skills make and sell popcorn. Students and teachers identified that independent study options can be created to service student interest. In addition, Westbrook High School has an active partnership with town businesses for internships and work-study. When a $28,000 grant to fund summer jobs for students evaporated this summer, the district provided the funds to keep the program intact.

This year with the rollout of the 1:1 Chromebook initiative, there is another layer of information on the ethical use of technology. Beyond the signing of an acceptable usage policy agreement, students and parents signed an agreement for how the Chromebooks would be used. The library media specialist and the director of information technology (IT) said they spoke with each student and family as they received the Chromebooks to ensure the parameters were understood.

When the curriculum includes formal cross-disciplinary learning, all students will have access to a curriculum that emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 4

Conclusions

There is informal alignment between the written and taught curriculum. Westbrook High School's small size offers opportunities for most teachers to be actively involved in curriculum revision. Teachers work in department PLCs that meet once a month and have the opportunity to make suggestions for curriculum revisions as needed based on informal reviews of instructional and assessment results. However, this is not consistent across all PLCs.The curriculum lead teacher meets with building and district administrators as well as PLC leaders to review work as well. Teachers noted that there is a heightened sense of ownership for the taught curriculum as they have written it. The U.S. history teacher said that as the only U.S. history teacher, he is highly protective of that work and would help a colleague new to the course to ensure this alignment happened. However, this would be done informally. The principal has requested that a learning objective be posted. This would allow her to monitor this alignment through her informal and formal observations. However, classroom observations showed that while agendas were sometimes present, only some classrooms had unit learning objectives posted. Departments have the opportunity to collaborate on assessments, share results and create unit plans, and share student work and student success through school-wide rubrics, although there is no formal process for this as of yet. When a formal process exists to ensure there is alignment between the written and the taught curriculum, WHS students will have the opportunity achieve the established learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- teachers
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Some loose curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district. Curriculum review rotates based on a six-year cycle. The cycle, however, allows for flexibility based on each department's needs. For example, the English curriculum was recently revised due to updated Common Core State Standards. A new English support course was also developed because of the results of the school-wide STAR reading assessment that revealed a population of students reading below grade level. There is a district curriculum matrix that outlines where all content areas are in the process as well as when they are next in line for revision. Teachers may use PLC time to review and evaluate curriculum to identify areas for potential revision. When courses are due for revision, the department involved will have time allotted during the summer. A few teachers noted that they were given release time during the school day for revision work because they are the sole teacher for that particular course. The curriculum lead teacher manages this work.

There is some vertical articulation between WHS and Westbrook Middle School that is aided by the fact the buildings are adjoined. Informal communication and meetings happen with core course departments (English, science, and math) between the middle school and high school. The notable exception is grade 7 and 8 social studies. Requests have been made for the middle school to align with the state C3 Frameworks for Social Studies, but this discussion has been met with resistance. Consequently middle school students study U.S. history for two years, putting them out of sequence with the high school that has aligned itself with the C3 Frameworks. This lack of alignment has an impact on the high school's ability to deliver its curriculum. Curriculum guides for K-12 show some articulation through the use of a common template only. Presently an elementary music teacher serves as the curriculum lead teacher with two release periods a day for this work. The thinness of this structure makes a more purposeful coordination and articulation not only between middle and high school but overall K-12 extremely difficult. When there is added curriculum infrastructure, it will allow for a stronger curricular coordination between the middle school and the high school as well as the K-12 continuum to support WHS students' achievement of the learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 6

Conclusions

Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are mostly sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.

The self-study identifies that WHS has the benefit of small classes. For example, the average class size in core subjects is 13 students. In world languages courses the average is 11. Overall there is adequate staffing. Staffing decisions are made collaboratively between the principal and the PLC leader of the department. In addition the superintendent stated she is dedicated to maintaining current staffing levels.

The sufficient instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, and library/media resources speak to a strong commitment between the school, the district, the board of education, and the town to provide what is necessary for WHS to achieve its learning expectations. During the summer of 2017, the district bought and deployed Chromebooks to every student at WHS. The library media specialist has sufficient print and non-print resources to implement the curriculum.

This sufficiency extends to co-curricular activities with the notable exception of the band room. The popularity of the program has caused a current space crunch that makes delivery of the music curriculum challenging. A practice room has been co-opted for storage space and the band director cannot freely move around the room to monitor the musicians due to crowding. With the exception of the crowding in the band room is addressed, WHS is fully able to implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- teachers
- parents
- department leaders
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 7

Conclusions

The district provides the school's professional staff with some personnel, time, financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum with infrequent use assessment results and current research.

According to the Endicott survey, 67 percent of teachers feel that they are directly involved in curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work. The curriculum process is directed by the curriculum lead teacher, an elementary teacher who works on a part-time capacity to oversee the process for the entire district. The curriculum lead teacher oversees the curriculum writing process and helps to provide resources and to organize release time for curriculum revision, which is provided on an as-needed basis. Although the district has made progress in providing the professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum, according the Endicott survey, only 47 percent of the teachers feel they have sufficient time to be engaged in formal curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work. This is most likely due to the fact that there is not time allocated during the school year specifically for curriculum revision. As there is no time allocated during the school year for curriculum revision, the curriculum lead teacher and the departments are responsible for arranging the requisite time. Teachers can request time in the summer or ask for release time during the school year. Release time during the school year, however, is not ideal as it interferes with instructional time. Consequently, many departments choose to do the work in the summer. Assessments such as STAR for reading, in-house assessments, and SAT results are used to monitor necessary revisions of curriculum. The curriculum lead teacher has monthly meetings with the principals and the superintendent and is invited to administrative council to report on ongoing work and needs. She also gets PLC minutes as another way to monitor curriculum revisions. The lead teacher has two periods of release time a day for this work, although she said most of the work is done outside of the school day. As much as possible she will front-load information to teachers scheduled for summer curriculum work, but there is minimal support during the process and teachers work on their own. The curriculum matrix identifies which content areas are next in the revision cycle for summer work. While there is PLC time available for curriculum work, it does not support a sustained effort. This and the lack of oversight and guidance during the process leave the curriculum dependent on the skill set of the teacher(s) writing it.

Members of the professional staff have opportunities to be actively involved in the process of ongoing curriculum development and review. This past summer time and funds were allocated for five English teachers and six world languages teachers to work. Through the revision schedule all teachers have an opportunity to be part of this process. The Westbrook Public Schools Revision Schedule outlines the curriculum revision cycle for pre-K-12 and all content areas from the 2014-2015 through 2019-2020 school years. It notes when work will begin as well as when the presentation to the board will occur. According to the curriculum revision schedule, with the notable exception of English and family and consumer science, other disciplines are working with curriculum documents that were last revised beyond the dedicated six year cycle: music in 2010, art in 2011, world languages in 2009, science in 2011, and social studies in 2013. The bulk of curriculum expenditures rest in the revision work. This year the district allocation is $20,977. This amount may not adequately address the need given the number of curriculums in need of upgrading and alignment to new standards.

According to the curriculum lead teacher, as of ten years ago the district did not have any written curriculum. A consultant was brought in to work with her on the process. A curriculum template was created at that time and has been subsequently modified to accommodate changes in mandates and standards. Teachers identified they worked with a Marzano text on instructional strategies three years ago and another mentioned a Carol Tomlinson book on differentiation. Some teachers go out to professional development, for instance, state workshops on the Ct. SATs and Advanced Placement workshops. There is, however, little evidence for how this research is brought back to enhance the faculty as a whole beyond informal sharing.

When the district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum with frequent use assessment

results and current research, all WHS students will be able to achieve the learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 2 Commendations

Commendation

The district's financial commitment to ensure small class sizes

Commendation

The use of a common template for curriculum documents that includes clear alignment to the school's learning expectations and the completion of all curriculum documents

Commendation

The structures in place to ensure that the curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding through inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking skills in all courses and levels

Commendation

The district's commitment to provide staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities and the resources of the library media center to fully implement the curriculum

Commendation

The use of the Teen Leadership class to support the social and civic learning expectations

Standard 2 Recommendations

Recommendation

Provide sufficient personnel, time, financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum with regular use of assessment results and current research

Recommendation

Design and implement a formal process to assess student progress to ensure the curriculum supports student achievement of all learning expectations

Recommendation

Design and implement formal cross-disciplinary learning opportunities

Recommendation

Increase vertical articulation with Westbrook Middle School

Standard 3 Indicator 1

Conclusions

At Westbrook High School instructional practices are regularly examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations predominantly through informal means outside of the set requirements for the district's teacher evaluation system.

Across the school there are elements of Westbrook High School (WHS) programs, processes and structures that provide evidence of teachers' instructional practices being regularly examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. Every classroom has the WHS core values and beliefs posted. It is difficult to determine how frequently they are reviewed with students.

The school principal, teachers and students are all familiar with the school's identified beliefs about learning. In addition, the 2016 Endicott survey shows that 84 percent of parents are familiar with the core values and beliefs of the school. To a degree, attempts are made to link instructional strategies back to 21st century academic learning expectations, measuring success through the corresponding rubrics. At WHS, teachers have opportunities to reflect on their instructional practices, both formally and informally through professional learning community (PLC) meetings, teacher evaluations, and discussions with peers. Departments examine and revise curriculum based on district and state initiatives such as the revised SAT or new standards during PLC. For example, the social studies department received professional development on inquiry-based lessons in 2015 to align with the state's adoption of the C3 Framework for Social Studies.

The teaching practices in most classes consciously support the school's core values and beliefs about learning, related to student engagement within a supportive and safe environment. Specific assignments are provided to students that are aligned with the 21st century learning expectations one-to-two times per marking period. Students feel comfortable taking intellectual risks and are provided with opportunities such as leading class discussions or having a choice in the methods used for solving math problems. A world languages teacher discussed that within his lessons, students sometimes ask if they can demonstrate their understanding by teaching the rest of the class a certain concept. However, it was noted the use student-centered learning is inconsistent.

Teachers are frequently engaged in informal reflective practices around WHS' beliefs about learning. Teachers have opportunities to reflect on their instructional practices through the teacher evaluation process, as well as informally with each other. For example, the English department evaluates student work and determine what needs to change from unit to unit or year to year within their own classrooms. Additional concerns are shared during PLC with the PLC lead teacher and their department peers. Through collaboration during PLC time, teachers look to improve their instruction and address other school and student issues. These meetings take place once a month. After reflecting on their practice, teachers demonstrate the value of collaboration by informally seeking assistance, which can be through another grade-level teacher or department member. If it is an instructional challenge to engage a student, teachers will reach out informally to teachers who have previously taught a student, other grade-level teachers, the school psychologist, or special education department for assistance. Planned and targeted instructional practice review among staff is not a formal process.

Most teachers examine their instructional practices through informal collaboration with colleagues. It is difficult to determine the extent to which this happens on a regularly basis, as issues do come up and are discussed. There is not a non-evaluative instructional review cycle. Formally through the district teacher evaluation, TEAM, or SEED process, all teachers have opportunities to reflect on their practice based on informal and formal observations and feedback from their evaluator. Sometimes teachers will voluntarily observe veteran teachers to improve their own practice, but it is not required and not every teacher does this.

Through the implementation of a more frequent, consistent, and structured instructional review process that encourages and supports peer-to-peer connections and reflection, teachers will be able to improve their instruction and better support learning for all students.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- Endicott survey

Standard 3 Indicator 2

Conclusions

At Westbrook High School, teachers' instructional practices mostly support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations through integration of technology, the use of an electronic portfolio system, authentic tasks to engage learners; personalizing instruction, engaging students as active and self-directed learners; some emphasis of inquiry, problem-solving and higher order thinking skills; however there are only informal cross disciplinary learning opportunities.In some areas, teachers personalize lessons by providing students with choice of topics for research and/or methods of presenting and demonstrating their knowledge and skills. In Individual Family Development class, an early college experience (ECE) course through the University of Connecticut, students are able to explore future careers and colleges of their choice. In English, students are able to select their own pieces of literature previously covered during the marking period to write their essay related to the same theme. Sometimes teachers provide different versions of texts to students or upload assignments on Google Classroom in advance. Teachers meet regularly with individual students or small groups of students to address individual learning needs. This is an informal process that can be led by a student or teacher. Outside the classroom, additional time is available during and after school for assistance. For students who need additional support beyond this, they may be assigned to support classes for reading and math. Informal discussions with their students' prior year's teachers is a primary method teachers use to gain background knowledge concerning student strengths and weaknesses. Teachers meet monthly within their department PLC meeting to discuss student issues or problems of practice. Grade-level teachers informally meet with each other to address students' individual learning needs as needed. If additional assistance is required, teachers will reach out to school counselors, the school psychologist, the special education department, or the student assistance team. Teachers follow the school-wide 21st century learning expectations rubric designated for their department to ensure all students are held accountable to school-wide expectations when certain assignments are assigned.

Westbrook High School employs some informal cross disciplinary learning opportunities. According to the 2016 Endicott survey, 65 percent of students state that they can share information they learned in one class with other classes. Within the History of Jazz class, students cover historical elements of the United States, which complements U.S. history courses. The social studies department will work with the English department to cover background information for novels, such as covering the roaring twenties in U.S. history, while the junior English class reads *The Great Gatsby*. This cross-disciplinary connection, however, is more informal than formal. Not all departments or specific grade-level teachers have a common planning period to collaborate. . School-wide, instruction is planned around the 21st century learning expectations, based on the rubrics created by the staff. Each department assesses two areas of the expectations. All department rubrics are aligned to the 21st century academic learning expectations.

The majority of the time, students were active and had opportunities, depending on the class to be self directed learners. In their science class, students took notes. Students took an active role in learning such as participating in Socratic seminars. The social studies department allows for inquiry-based projects. A student in a science class composed an orchestral selection for the different stages of mitosis. The English department shared an example of an assessment designed for students to determine if the American Dream is easier to obtain now than when their parents were teenagers. Though students were involved in their learning, most of the observed activities required lower order thinking, such as restating information and copying notes. In most classes, discussions were teacher-led, with limited opportunities for students to take ownership of their own learning. During the extended passing time or break during the day, most students met with teachers for additional help or to talk about other issues. When there is not an elective course available for their area of interest, students can design an independent study course.

Most teachers provided students with the objectives for class either for the day or for the unit, such as "Students will be able to" statements where students will have to explain, discuss, compare, or translate. In a social studies classroom students were analyzing primary source documents to determine if Columbus is a hero or villain. At another time, students were working on writing an editorial. Eleven out of fourteen students were using their

Chromebooks for this assignment. The English department utilizes themes throughout their units, such as with heroism, with related projects and literature. The Mobile Applications class students create their own cell phone applications. Real-world applications are integrated into many classes. Family and consumer students research future careers. Some departments provide students with higher order thinking tasks to demonstrate their learning. The English department provided students with multiple choices on how to create a representation of a hero's journey. Most teachers provide opportunities for students to analyze what they learn. Some of the teachers provide exit-slips at the end of each lesson to evaluate students' understanding, The math department allows students to redo assignments as do other departments. Students have to explain why they answered a question incorrectly as well as provide a reason for how they came up with the new correct response. However, this was not demonstrated in all classes. Utilizing department-based rubrics and 21st century academic learning expectation rubrics allowed students to reflect on their learning and see their learning progression over time with the use of the electronic portfolio.

Some teachers frequently have students apply knowledge and skills to authentic tasks. In the Environmental Science class, students test the quality of the water behind the school. The water is analyzed for chemicals and pollutants. The data is then analyzed and the source of pollution is hypothesized by students. This information can be shared with others outside of the school and with the community. However, only 48 percent of students agree that they have an opportunity to apply what they are learning outside of the classroom. Teachers regularly provide updates for parents on PowerSchool and in Google Classroom. The electronic portfolios are occasionally seen by parents. Some students said their parents had not seen them, while others said their parents did. Depending on the subject area, students will have multiple opportunities for revisions and reviews, both teacher and peer. Once a student artifact has been reviewed, it can be uploaded into the electronic portfolio. As students continue to update their electronic portfolio, they have the ability to see their growth from year to year, depending on when they first started their portfolio. Sometimes students participate in meaningful projects that lead to formal presentations. In English class, students create their own speeches about something they are passionate about. Students have reached out to the Westbrook community fundraising for special causes like hurricane relief and breast cancer. Westbrook High School students have also completed projects related to school climate. Students have been recognized, winning Facebook's Changemaker Award and the regional Agent of Change Award. Most students participate in internships and volunteer opportunities and the school has developed many different community partnerships. Until recently, Westbrook High School was awarded a summer job training grant. When state funding was eliminated, the district continued to support this initiative. Westbrook High School was the only school in their region to continue the program without state funds. Other community partnerships include internships, job shadowing, employment, site visits, in-school presentations, speaking engagements for students, business participation in school activities, and volunteer and community service opportunities. Course selections change by student choice and needs year by year. Students shared that they are able to request a specific course they are interested in at the end of each year. For example, some students were interested in neuroscience, so a course was developed. If there are not enough students to offer a specific, they are able to further develop their interests in a possible career or subject area through an independent study.

Most members engage students in self-assessment and reflection through their electronic portfolio process. Students do not submit all of their assignments into the electronic portfolio, but will submit those assignments that have been scored with the 21st century learning expectations rubric. Students are able to see their progression on the rubrics and their work samples from year to year. Prior to being given an assignment with the rubric, students review the measures and the areas they will be assessed. Not all students are provided with exemplars that meet rubric requirements in each class. The rubrics are posted in the hallways, but not posted in each classroom. In most classes, teachers provide students the opportunity to reflect on their work, as in math and English classes. In math classes, students are able to redo an assignment by explaining why their answer is wrong and submitting the correct response and explaining why it is correct. From the presented evidence it is difficult to determine if this practice is consistent across all disciplines and in all courses. WHS teachers regularly provide time within and room. WHS students have access to a late bus four days a week which is critical for all students in terms of the equity of access to teachers after school for extra help. During meetings with students, they repeatedly commended their teachers for being approachable and available for help. Small class sizes permit more time for teachers to check-in with their students to formally and informally monitor progress.

Most teachers integrate technology to a varying degree into the classroom. At WHS, 86 percent of students agree that teachers ask them to use technology in their assignments. In varying capacities, all teachers integrate

technology in their classrooms to enhance instruction. In science and history classrooms, SMARTBoard presentations were used. All teachers have access to technology, as well as computer labs. All teachers were provided with professional development to utilize Google Classroom. Some teachers were trained over the summer (2017) and led school-wide training for teachers to use and setup their online Google Classrooms. During the year, teachers informally reach out to their peers for technology assistance, if needed. The director of instructional technology is also available for technical assistance. It is difficult to determine if all teachers provide higher order thinking activities with their SmartBoards and utilize the full potential of Google Classroom. This year all students were provided with a Chromebook so they would have computer access in the classroom and at home. Most teachers utilize this technology with online activities and activities such as Quizlet. In some classes students did not use or did not have their Chromebooks. It is the expectation that all teachers use technology in the classroom, but to the specific extent, it is unclear. For homework purposes, teachers will use Google Classroom and are required to post homework assignments by 3:00 p.m. each school day, if giving out homework. In some classes, teachers will use a SMARTBoard presentation for students to interact with where they can write on the screen. Some teachers allow students to submit their homework assignments electronically.Students also have the opportunity to collaboratively work with each other through online lessons on the Chromebooks, as well as for peer editing. However, this varies from every class and department.

When teachers are presented with instructional training for specific expectations for the integration of technology and opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning and consistent emphasis of inquiry, problem-solving and higher order thinking skills are implemented, WHS instructional practices will fully support achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey

Standard 3 Indicator 3

Conclusions

At Westbrook High School, some teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by using formative assessment, especially during instructional time; strategically differentiating; purposefully organizing group learning activities; and providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom.

Teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student based on observations, discussions with staff members/students, and observing different forms of assessment. In the Forensics class, self-check quizzes are a key means to gauge student understanding. In a math class, students had the opportunity to complete an exit slip. Many teachers gauge student learning through questioning and prompting. However there is only sporadic use of written formative assessments in classrooms. During classroom observations, most assessment of students was through teacher monitoring, with no formal documentation of this monitoring process. A review of quiz answers is sometimes provided during the next class to review and ensure understanding. In the history of jazz class, specific whole-group and individual feedback was given to students on their recent quiz. Students receive feedback in most of their classes depending on the assignment. Students have opportunities to redo their assignments based on the feedback given.

Sometimes teachers will strategically differentiate their assignments. Teachers typically learn about their students from students' prior teachers. Having small classrooms and resources, including the school psychologist, school counselor, special education department, and peers provides teachers with potential strategies to assist all students. In most classrooms, teachers provide assignments and course materials, including rubrics and resources via Google Classroom. Some lessons examples use electronic resources such as Newsela. Most classes used different forms of graphic organizers and provided students with paper copies of presentation slides to take notes on even though most students had Chromebooks. In the Spanish classroom, teachers use visual aides and graphic organizers. When it comes to tracking formative assessment data, school counselors look at class grades and reach out to teachers if further interventions are needed. Teachers are also required to call home when a student's grade falls below a C.

Some teachers at WHS plan group learning activities that are designed to engage students with in-depth learning and to assist them in collaborating with each other. Teachers were able to discuss different grouping strategies used in class, including by ability, but it varied class by class.Most teachers provide extra help sessions for students who need additional time to learn, These groups can be designed depending on the class size and level of the course with students of mixed abilities working together. However observations and student shadowing provided minimal evidence of students working in cooperative groups. and 65.1 percent of students agree that teachers offer suggestions to help them improve school work. Based on teacher feedback on essays in English using Google Documents, teachers provide online feedback to support students in and out of school. During school, students have an extended passing time, when most teachers are available to meet with students. There is a homework room that is available to students after school, along with a late bus available Monday through Thursday. The homework room is available on Fridays as long as students have their own transportation. Within classrooms, it is common practice for teachers and students to discuss assignments and schedule times to meet. Having small class sizes allows for more opportunities for individual attention toward students. Teachers provide accommodations to students based on student needs, including extended time, preferential seating, and copies of assignments/lesson in advance.

When teachers have a formal system to gather and analyze multiple forms of assessment data, instruction can be more purposefully differentiated to meet the needs of all learners.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey

Standard 3 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Most teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by informally using student achievement data from assessments; examining student work; using some feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents; examining some current research; and engaging in informal professional discourse focused on instructional practice.

Outside of the monthly PLC meetings, teachers have regular informal opportunities during the school day to meet collaboratively to review school-wide or discipline-specific assessment data/results. During PLCs, teachers have some opportunity to discuss curriculum and instructional strategies with the lead curriculum teacher. Some departments have a scheduled common planning time and some teachers who have common periods off will discuss students they share informally. Teachers examine classroom performance data for their students and in some cases modify their teaching practices based on what they have learned. Teachers examine a variety of school-based local assessment data. For example, the English department uses data collected through a standardized reading assessment to identify students with weaknesses in the area of reading. With this data, specific interventions may be recommended for a student such as a reading workshop class. Given that many courses are singleton courses, it is difficult for teachers to have conversations with peers to address any needed instructional shifts or issues with student understanding of concepts within a course. Teachers have been provided with school-wide SAT and PSAT data. In response to the SAT results, several teachers have attended outside professional development to learn about the recent revisions of the SAT test. In addition, the math department created a math support course to address individual student needs. Department-level student learning objectives are created yearly in all departments. The school counseling department periodically reviews student academic progress. All teachers receive feedback from the System of Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED) teacher evaluation process. However, there is no formal peer-to-peer observation process. The self-study noted that teachers used Common Core State Standards (CCSS), National and State Standards, such as, the new C3 Frameworks (college, career, and civic life) from the National Council for Social Studies, the new Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), state frameworks, and educational experts, e.g., Marzano, Brown, and Tomlinson), to improve instruction. For example, the social studies department had professional development in 2015 to implement inquiry strategies into their classes; however, there has been no other professional learning opportunities to improve or review their practice. The English department is using Kaplan and Khan Academy resources to assist with SAT instruction.

In the library/media center, there is a dedicated professional research section available to teachers. If texts are requested, the library/media specialist can order them for teachers. Texts that are included are related to differentiation, leadership, data analysis, and diversity. The library/media specialist reports that teachers only take out these texts a couple times per year. With the exception of school-wide climate knowledge, there is limited evidence to determine if the knowledge gained from teachers who have attended conferences or have received specialized training is shared school-wide. Books are usually added to the collection when a teacher attends a professional development session and then returns with a text. Teachers have resources available to them in their library, and they have access to most online databases to assist them with any professional learning. While there are resources available, it is not always evident that they are being used. When teachers went through the restorative practices training, they were provided with texts to go along with their learning.

The formal time that is reserved for teachers is limited to PLC, where it is driven by PLC leaders with some teacher input. This time is not always dedicated toward affording extensive opportunities to review best practices and discuss student assessment data and instructional practices. Some decisions in the school that impact instruction are made upon a review of current research and best practice, which included the movement toward improving school climate. For example, the school climate initiative is based on work with National School Climate Center and the Yale Center for Emotional Learning. District and school leaders support ongoing professional learning for teachers through financial support and allow for four full days of professional development along with two half days. Through the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program and SEED, the administration supports ongoing instructional support for teachers.

When teachers have a formalized approach to share and critique instructional strategies and discuss assessment and performance data as well as ensure parents and students have opportunities for feedback on how to improve instruction, students will benefit from a coherent approach to instruction.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey

Standard 3 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Teachers consistently work to maintain their expertise in their content areas with some attention paid to the improving instruction. Nearly all teachers, as adult learners, maintain expertise in their content areas, and many teachers, as reflective practitioners, examine current literature research and best practices in instruction in order to improve their classroom instructional strategies. During monthly PLC meetings, teachers occasionally have formal discussions with colleagues relating to student work and the sharing of best practices and instructional strategies. For example, during the school day, the English department shares a common planning period. The small close-knit school community at WHS lends itself to frequent informal professional conversations and discussions about students and instruction with colleagues. Teacher's respective primary evaluators provide specific feedback through the yearly SEED teacher evaluation process. According to the 2016 Endicott survey, 74 percent of teachers have an advanced degree. As participants in the State of Connecticut required TEAM process, new teachers are supported through school-based mentors. The faculty feels adequately supported through budgetary funds for professional development opportunities to attend both local and national conferences designed to improve their instructional practices. There are structures in place such as the professional development evaluation committee (PDEC) to determine professional development wants and needs for groups and individual teachers. However, it is difficult to determine the extent to which the knowledge gained through this professional development is shared with colleagues within a department or disseminated to the greater school community on a consistent basis. When teachers remain current with their content and instructional practices with an emphasis on focused professional collaboration and sharing of best practices and professional development, this will support existing district initiatives and enable all teachers to improve their practice.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey

Standard 3 Commendations

Commendation

A strong working knowledge of the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations that are clearly embedded into the fabric of the school community

Commendation

The shift to an electronic portfolio system that gives students opportunities to self-assess and self-reflect on their work

Commendation

The organic opportunities for the sharing of student work and for informal professional collaboration, resulting from the small scale of the school

Commendation

The district support of technology in each classroom

Commendation

The district's financial support, school-wide and individually, for professional development

Commendation

The ample opportunities for extra help after school

Standard 3 Recommendations

Recommendation

Create and implement a structured process for regular professional discourse to increase the alignment of instructional practices across the school

Recommendation

Design and implement sustained professional development to expand the use of technology for a variety of instructional and assessment purposes

Recommendation

Create and implement ongoing opportunities for teachers to observe and reflect on each others' instruction

Recommendation

Design and implement adequate time for collaboration within and across disciplines

Recommendation

Develop and implement a parent and student communication system to gain instructional feedback

Recommendation

Provide ongoing professional development on differentiation, formative assessments, and summative assessment to monitor and improve instruction

Recommendation

Develop a school-wide repertoire of formative assessments

Standard 4 Indicator 1

Conclusions

Westbrook High School teachers continuously use the school-wide analytic rubrics to assess individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations; however, the school does not yet have a formal process to continuously employ these rubrics to assess all students' individual progress and school-wide student progress in achieving all of the school's learning expectations.

During the 2016-2017 school year, all departments in the school took responsibility for utilizing two of the seven school-wide analytic rubrics to measure the school's 21st century academic learning expectations. The Endicott survey of 2016 shows that 77 percent of teachers agree with the statement, "I use the school-wide analytic rubrics when assessing student work." In addition, subject areas have created content-specific rubrics which are used along with the school-wide rubrics when assessing student work. Teachers often use both rubrics to score tasks/assessments throughout the year, sometimes scoring up to eight pieces of student work a year this way. These rubrics allow teachers to assess individual student progress in achieving the learning expectations. The electronic student portfolio, which was also fully implemented during 2016-2017, is used as a vehicle for formally housing evidence of student achievement of the learning expectations. The electronic portfolio requires students to choose 13 tasks or assessments over their four years at WHS that are scored with school-wide rubrics and demonstrate their growth for the academic expectations. Over their four years, students document which social and civic opportunities they engage in to show they have developed a spirit of belonging and have contributed to a positive school climate by actively participating in the school community and respecting others.

Although the WHS faculty has implemented the use of the electronic student portfolio, and the board of education passed it as a graduation requirement for the Class of 2019, the school is not collecting or tracking data from the rubrics to assess whole-school achievement yet. Since each department owns two of the school-wide rubrics, all students have multiple opportunities to be assessed on the rubrics. The portfolio process requires the students to have a summative reflection on their progress toward achieving 21st century learning expectations at the end of each year which could act as a formative assessment for themselves. To cap off their growth over the four years at WHS, seniors share their finished portfolios with the members of their advisory group. When the professional staff employs a formal process to collect and analyze whole-school data, it will be possible for them to ensure that all students are meeting the 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- students
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 2

Conclusions

While there is formal process in place for the school's professional staff to communicate individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families it has not been enacted; the whole-school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations is only informally discussed among the school community. The school is currently putting into practice its established plan to communicate student progress of the learning expectations to students via the school-wide rubrics. WHS has begun to use electronic portfolios as a way to collect information to assess student progress toward meeting the learning expectations.Currently, students upload samples of work that demonstrate progress toward a learning expectation. Students then write a reflection on their progress. Student electronic portfolios will be shared with parents; however, at this point, the communication about growth is left up to the student and parent if they choose to have a discussion. At this time, teachers share this information with families who attend parent-teacher conferences and there are no other specific dates to communicate progress toward the learning expectations. The school's philosophy is that school-wide rubrics are models for growth and are not used in the grading process. Student self-reflection on their own portfolios is the only means by which students know their progress on the school's learning expectations.

The professional staff members believe that the electronic portfolio will allow the community at large to track student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. A critical need identified in the panel presentation is the establishment of a review process for the electronic portfolio program. A report to stakeholders is currently absent, but will be able to be shared once the review of the portfolios is in place. By implementing a regularly scheduled review of the student portfolio, the school will be able to identify trends in whole-school achievement, adjust curriculum and instruction for increased student success, and share this progress with the school community.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- panel presentation
- students
- central office personnel

Standard 4 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Professional staff informally collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. Teachers collect, disaggregate and analyze school-based local assessment data as it relates to student learning objectives (SLOs). Other data is collected, but the staff does not use it to inform their practice. The school psychologist collects and tracks data on students who are referred to the student assistance team (SAT) and assistance may be provided to students as a result. ALEKS (an adaptive online math program) scores are used to support goals and objectives for students with IEPs, but there is no evidence of disaggregating data to develop specific strategies to help a struggling student. Summative and standardized test results are occasionally reviewed by professional learning communities (PLCs), but these results are not used to identify inequities. Data is collected on English learners (EL) and their performance after exiting the EL program. Yet, there is little discussion about whether an IEP or EL student is making similar progress to their general education peers.

Teachers informally review student work and get support from colleagues in different departments as to how the rubrics for learning expectations are scored and look for consistency throughout the school. Standardized test results are discussed for the transition from eighth to ninth grade in both English and math to identify any potential areas of weakness in students that may need to be addressed. Test results are also used at the end of the school year to determine which students may need additional support in either geometry or algebra II classes the following year. PSAT and SAT data are shared with the English and math PLC leaders to populate the SAT prep course and discuss strategies that could be used with students. The school identified the need for common assessments which are used consistently in classes taught by multiple teachers. To that end, the English PLC chose new instructional strategies to be tried in classes, and at the following monthly meeting, evaluated the success of the strategies. Changes to the curriculum are made every one-to-six years as standards change and needs are identified by teachers or the lead curriculum teacher. At the present time, it is difficult for the staff to complete any analysis of the common assessments as teachers are often the only teacher of a course. When professional staff engages in formal collection and analysis of data, they will be able to identify and formulate a plan to address any achievement gaps or inequities.

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

Standard 4 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Prior to each unit of study, most teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed. The Endicott survey results found that 32 percent of staff are undecided whether or not this occurs. Unit learning objectives are posted in classrooms during the teaching of that unit, but it is unclear if they are articulated before the unit instruction begins. Posters of school-wide learning expectations are evident in many classrooms, but it is uncertain if those expectations are connected to instruction before a new unit begins. Results of a survey created by the assessment of and for student learning self-study subcommittee indicate that most of the teachers provide unit-specific learning goals to be assessed. Some of the teachers post these in their classroom; others provide a hard copy to the students; and others simply state the objectives when introducing a new unit. When teachers consistently communicate to students the learning expectations and unit-specific learning goals prior to each unit of study, students can see the end goal, what they will learn, and how they will be asked to demonstrate that learning by the end of the unit.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 4 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Teachers provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success, such as corresponding rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement prior to summative assessments. The Endicott survey indicates 71 percent of students understand in advance the work they have to accomplish to meet the teacher's expectations. This is an area of strength that is confirmed by students, teachers and parents. For example, students might be provided with checklists which indicate elements of the task or project to be completed. In addition, exemplars are shared for modeling. In a forensics class, the teacher modeled forming the evidence-collecting bindle in order for students to understand and to reproduce the bindle correctly. Many teachers post the rubrics and reminders in Google Classroom to assist students in reaching success. Continued use of school-wide rubrics, content-specific rubrics, and exemplars will ensure that students know the criteria for success on assessments.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- students
- parents

Standard 4 Indicator 6

Conclusions

In each unit of study, teachers regularly employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments. Teachers use formative assessment in the form of exit slips/activities and dipsticks or check-ins in some classes to inform daily instruction. From work samples provided and teacher conversations, a range of assessment strategies such as book reviews, essays, lab reports, dialogues, posters, editorials, projects, research and presentations in target languages, videos, and creating apps are used. This is supported by the Endicott survey in which 97 percent of staff say that teachers use a variety and range of assessment strategies including formative and summative assessments. Teachers in English and math explained how students are encouraged to rework assignments or assessments to deepen and correct learning by using multiple drafts and error analysis and reflection respectively. Exemplars were used during classroom visits (and others were discussed during teacher interviews) to give students a model to follow for assignments and projects. The lead curriculum teacher indicates that teachers use summative assessments such as end-of-unit tests to evaluate student learning objectives, to identify a need for unit revision, or to modify scope and sequence for a course. As teachers continue to regularly employ a range of assessment strategies to check for understanding, they will inform their instruction and be able to monitor student progress toward the 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 4 Indicator 7

Conclusions

While teachers have an opportunity to collaborate in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments, this is not a routine, formalized practice. The PLCs meet once per month as departments. In addition, the PLC leaders and administration meet monthly for collaboration as well. Through teacher and leadership interviews, it was reported that the professional staff reviews summative assessment results and makes modifications accordingly. A review of PLC minutes does not indicate that time is spent reviewing assessment practices themselves. Teachers indicate that there is a need for increased attention on common assessments within and across courses. The curriculum documents show various possible forms of assessments during a unit, yet only a performance-based assessment is common. Teachers regularly examine specific and measurable criteria for success through the use of school-wide analytic rubrics and department-specific rubrics as it pertains to their student learning objectives. When a teacher detects that a student might not be meeting success, the teacher informally watches them or connects with support staff. The school-wide analytic rubrics have just recently been used with students, and there is no formal way to track whether or not the rubrics are an appropriate measure of student success. When teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis and revision of formative and summative assessments, all assessments will be of and for learning.

Sources of Evidence
- teachers
- students
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 8

Conclusions

In some areas, teachers provide specific, timely and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work. Student work and teacher and student interviews show that some teachers provide students with immediate opportunities to revise/resubmit their work before it is formally assessed. The practice of peer edits, using Google Docs for commenting, and the opportunity to submit rough drafts is a positive formative assessment practice. In addition, the math department's practice of error analysis on quizzes allows students to correct mistakes and explain the error in their thinking before taking a summative assessment, which cannot be retaken. The principal hopes to cultivate a culture of revision throughout the school which will promote an equitable learning environment as stated in the core values. The Endicott survey from 2016 shows that 52.8 percent of students feel that teachers assess/correct in a reasonable amount of time, and 65.1 percent of students agree that teachers offer suggestions to help improve their school work. Both teachers and students commented that, at times, teachers review results of summative assessments and provide feedback prior to beginning a new unit of study, but not on a consistent basis. When teachers make specific, timely and corrective feedback a deliberate and consistent practice, students will be able to revise and improve their work to show they are meeting content area goals and 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 9

Conclusions

Teachers regularly use formative assessment to informally inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning. English, math, science, and social studies teachers state that they rely on formative assessment to shape subsequent instruction. Submitting drafts allows teachers to measure the progression of student learning. Varied practices of using entrance/exit slips, "do now" activities, mini-quizzes, check-ins, and conversations with students allow teachers to gauge student comprehension and skill acquisition. Due to the low student-to-teacher ratio, teachers take pride in knowing their students and their level of learning and adjust instruction as a result. Teachers expressed that they can collaborate in PLCs about assessments and instructional practices, although they do not often compare results of formative assessments. In addition, due to a lack of a formal data tracking system, there is no way to track and analyze school, department, or course trends. When teachers formalize their practice of using the assessment data to inform and adapt their instruction to improve student learning, teachers will ensure both individual and whole-school achievement of the 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 10

Conclusions

Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, occasionally examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, including student work; common course and common grade-level assessments individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations; standardized assessments; data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions; and survey data from current students and alumni.

Occasionally teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice. The curriculum lead teacher identified that examining student work is sometimes an impetus for curriculum review. She stated that, when there is new research about instructional practices, revisions to curriculum will be made to incorporate these practices. Teachers individually examine course assessments in order to identify gaps in the current curriculum. Discussion of improvement to instructional practices may occur in PLCs when teachers collaborate to discuss student learning objectives. In addition, evidence from the self-study shows that special education teachers collaborate with general education teachers to examine course assignments to implement appropriate changes to instructional practices and to support learning. Examination of school-wide rubrics is done individually, but not collaboratively at this time, so those results are not used to revise curriculum. Teachers informally and individually look at rubric results to improve their own instructional practices in the classroom.

The English department administers the STAR reading assessment and uses that data to provide students additional support through the reading workshop class, a not-for-credit course. In addition, beyond the sending of STAR assessment data and some specific student strategies that have worked for a majority of students, there is minimal use of data from sending schools or post-secondary institutions ro review and revise the curriculum and instructional strategies to ensure student success. The principal and PLC leadership team look at PSAT and SAT data to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in students, though it is unclear how this data is used to inform curriculum and instruction beyond monitoring students with deficits. The guidance counselors along with teachers examine student learning to suggest placement into the newly created SAT critical reading, SAT writing, or SAT mathematics prep courses.

While the school uses current student survey data to identify possible course offerings, it does not offer information which would lead to curriculum revision. There is limited data from alumni to use to revise curriculum or improve instructional practices. When teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of assessment evidence of student learning regularly, include data from sending schools as well as post-secondary institutions, survey current students and alumni, and monitor individual and whole school progress toward meeting the school's 21st century learning expectations it will strengthen the curriculum and improve instructional practice.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- school leadership

Standard 4 Indicator 11

Conclusions

Grading and reporting practices are infrequently reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. The Endicott survey results show that 55 percent of the staff agrees the the grading and reporting practices are reviewed and revised regularly. The most recent discussion and revision of the grading policy took place in 2015, but, since the implementation of school-wide rubrics, the staff has not come to an agreement on how to apply the rubric grading into their overall grading practices. There is neither an explanation of the rubrics and the student portfolio in the student and parent handbook nor an explanation of how they will be used to report student progress. The self-study indicates that the staff know that their next steps are to ensure that the grading practices align with the learning expectations and to require all teachers to use the school-wide rubrics created to monitor student learning. Departments have discussed and reviewed their own grading practices such as calibrating the use of school-wide and department-based rubrics and the weighting of assignments and assessments. Teachers indicate a need for consistency in balancing a variety of assessments including the quantity and type of assessment.

WHS teachers and students indicate that there have been changes to the school's grading practices. For example, some teachers allowing revisions and retakes on assessments is a positive change and reflects their beliefs of ongoing learning. PLCs have begun to ensure consistent grading practices within subject areas, but, at this time, they are not consistent among all teachers. When grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment between and across curricular areas, student learning can be evaluated consistently throughout the school.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- students
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Commendations

Commendation

The widespread use of school-wide analytic rubrics and content-specific rubrics

Commendation

The implementation of electronic student portfolios that helps students assess their progress in achieving the learning expectations

Commendation

The use of revision and retakes to deepen student learning

Commendation

The wide variety of assessment strategiesthat give students multiple means to demonstrate proficiency

Standard 4 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop and implement a formal process to assess individual and school-wide student progress in achieving the school's learning expectations and communicate progress to all stakeholders

Recommendation

Implement a school-wide data protocol for student achievement to identify trends and respond to them

Recommendation

Collaborate in formal ways to create, analyze, and revise formative and summative assessments

Recommendation

Devise and implement a formal process to review and revise grading and reporting practices to ensure alignment within and across curricular areas and to the core values and beliefs about learning

Recommendation

Develop a means to track and report out on student performance on the shared school-wide rubrics and other local assessments to drive instruction

Standard 5 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The school community is consciously and continuously building a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all. The student and parent handbook indicates high academic and social expectations. Core values, beliefs, and learning expectations are reinforced within school curriculum and assessment rubrics. Behavioral expectations and attendance policies are outlined in the handbook and set high expectations for all students. There is also a school climate policy document that was created by the board of education in 2014. At the beginning of each year, teacher and student expectations are clearly outlined in a welcome assembly on the first day of school and student handbooks are distributed in advisory. The principal addresses issues directly with staff as they arise. Referral data has increased and decreased based on student population, from three referrals in the 2015-2016 school year to eleven referrals in the 2016-2017 school year. The building principal noted that issues are dealt with differently now as the building moves to the use of restorative practices.

The school has programs including awareness day, teen leadership, school climate committee, restorative practice initiative, discipline committee, student assistance team (SAT), collaboration with Westbrook Family Services, and academic assistance rooms. The school has programs such as a school-wide field day, senior photo and breakfast, National Honor Society, honor roll, and 20 different athletic offerings, including Unified Sports. In addition, the Rotary Club sponsors a student of the month. The school provides opportunities for various after-school activities, and a good number of AP courses are offered. The math department offers students error analysis (retakes) in math. Students feel their teachers are very involved, and rubrics provide expectations for students to follow. Students are excited about the opportunity to participate in spirit day, and seniors are able to buy a brick as well as decorate the senior rock. Because the school community fosters mutual respect and student responsibility for learning while providing a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture, it ensures a sense of pride, shared ownership, and high expectations for all.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- community members
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 2

Conclusions

In some areas, Westbrook High School is equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

WHS promotes inclusive settings throughout its course offerings. All students are enrolled in at least two heterogeneously grouped core courses during their high school experience (English, writing workshop, social studies, and civics). AP US History is offered to all students for college credit without a prerequisite. Health and PE courses are also heterogeneously grouped. All students have the opportunity to gain UConn Early College Experience (ECE) credits, by taking music theory 1 and 2, music appreciation, and individual and family development. It is not clearly defined, however, which courses are heterogeneously grouped within the program of studies.

Discussions with PLC members and support staff at student assistance team meetings indicated that in-class groupings were created informally or occasionally. Through PLCs and collaboration with the curriculum lead teacher, there is a limited focus on student groupings with sporadic implementation of best practices based on research. The Core Six, which are six research-based, classroom-proven strategies to help teachers and students respond to the demands of the Common Core, is being used on a limited basis in English. There are two resource rooms comprising two tutors, two para-educators, and two teachers. There are also two specialized classrooms, one for life skills and the other for emotionally disturbed students. Co-teaching also occurs in the content areas to allow equal to access for all students, regardless of disability.

All students are expected to achieve the school-wide learning expectations, which are posted throughout the building and classrooms. The principal reinforces these expectations through faculty meetings and informal/formal discussions with staff. High-needs learners are included in the content courses. Any courses that are leveled require only the successful attainment of prerequisite skills and students are not denied access based on other factors. Teachers, special education staff, school counselors, and support staff work in conjunction to make sure that the entire curriculum is available for all students. Students regularly change levels from year to year based on performance on standards and level of acquisition of key skills. According to the Endicott survey, approximately 75 percent of students agree that they have numerous opportunities to take courses in a heterogeneous setting while only 9 percent of students feel that they do not.

When students are grouped based on the analysis of data to support an equitable and inclusive setting, all students will be challenged academically and 21st century learning expectations will be more supported.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents

- department leaders
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 3

Conclusions

There is a consistent formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. A formal advisory program is in place which assures that all students have an adult other than their school counselor with whom to interact on a regular basis. The advisory groups comprise approximately 10-12 students with one teacher and meet twice per month for 30 minutes. Students are grouped based on grade level, since topics are more appropriate at times for certain ages. Throughout their four years at Westbrook High School, each student remains with the same advisor in order to create a safe and nurturing environment. During this time, the formal advisory curriculum is implemented by the teacher. The objective of advisory is to foster relationships between students and adults through shared experience and activities to inspire self-reflection, academic responsibility, individual growth, and to improve school climate. The lessons within this curriculum reflect the school's 21st century learning expectations. In addition to advisory, students work with over 70 different organizations within the community, giving them additional opportunities to build positive relationships with adults in the community. Partnerships examples include internships, job shadowing, and site visits. The school also works closely with the Elks Club and Westbrook Community Services. Because there is consistency through the advisory program, students feel that they have adults who support their personal and academic growth.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teachers
- department leaders

Standard 5 Indicator 4

Conclusions

In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff periodically engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning; use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices; dedicate formal time to implement professional development; and apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

The PLC, district professional development and evaluation committee (PDEC)/leadership meeting calendar was approved by the PDEC in May 2017. The calendar outlines faculty meeting, department-based PLC, school-based PLC, and district PDEC meeting dates. There is also a monthly school-wide PLC. The faculty has the opportunity to meet one time per month to collaborate formally during PLC meetings. Four full days and two half days have been dedicated for professional development. Faculty meetings, which occur once a month, are used to inform the staff of new initiatives, meet state and professional mandated requirements, and assess school-wide emergency drills and issues that may be facing the school, e.g., testing windows. Curriculum meetings take place once per month. The majority of reflective conversation exists informally, and the collaboration among the departments varies. With the exception of PLCs and monthly faculty meetings, formal collaboration across departments with discussion around data is limited. Teams expressed that they meet with one another on an as-needed basis before and after school to address individual student concerns. Teachers informally review learning expectations, grading, and work quality with each other, within and across departments.

Through PLCs and meetings with the curriculum lead teacher, teachers review instructional practices as well as curriculum. The special education department routinely reviews student work and expectations through the student assistance team meetings and when preparing for PPTs. Teachers referenced the Core Six as an available professional reading, but professional book clubs or study groups are not common. The library/media specialist has a professional reading section in the library/media center. Teachers seek out the curriculum lead teacher for discussions regarding teaching and learning. PLC facilitators are available for informal discussions on topics related to teaching and learning. Professional development on restorative practices from Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) consultant, Dr. Jo Ann Freiberg, has been a focus as well as the Wilson reading in special education. Other professional development has focused on the 1:1 role out of the Chromebook and Google Classroom. Teachers report that they are never turned down, when they request to attend a professional conference. The technology teacher stated that he regularly participates in online courses related to technology. The library/media specialist belongs to associations throughout the state. Teachers feel there is support for attending workshops related to their content area.

The professional development overview calendar is broken up by semester. This calendar designates full- and half-day workshops across the schools in the district. Topics specified on the calendar for WHS include hazards training, mandated reporting training, NEASC, Chromebook program, conferences, autism diagnosis observation schedule (ADOS), and physical psychological management training (PMT).

When the principal and professional staff routinely engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning, student learning will improve.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teachers
- department leaders
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 5

Conclusions

School leaders occasionally use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning. The Westbrook educator development and performance plan is grounded in a theory of action of growth and continuous improvement. It is based on the theory that improvement in teaching is derived from work in the key components of the instructional core that is "the teacher and the student in the presence of content." (City, Elmore, Fiarman and Teitel, 2009, p. 22). The core of the Westbrook educator evaluation and professional development program is rooted in the board of education approved mission to "educate, challenge, and inspire" all students toward their highest levels of achievement. The program is designed to meet State of Connecticut standards for the performance of educators leading to and evidenced by improved student learning. In speaking with teachers and administrators, there are limited collaborative opportunities for feedback and instructional improvement. The principal is visible in the classrooms and supportive to her staff through formal and informal measures; however, this is somewhat limited as the principal is the sole administrator in the building. This also restricts what collaborative opportunities are available.

Student learning objectives are created based on PSAT, SAT, curriculum-based assessments, and through the consistent implementation of the rubrics. Westbrook administrators received extensive training to implement this model throughout the district, in both state and regional venues, e.g., LEARN Regional Educational Service Center. This system allows ample feedback and support as required to improve instruction. All administrators in Westbrook Public Schools have successfully completed the training and subsequent exam to become certified in the state's System for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED) process. Both new and veteran faculty members participate in this process; additionally, new teachers are mentored by veteran teachers under the state's Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program. Faculty and staff are held accountable for implementing student learning objectives (SLOs), which directly impact the achievement of all students. PSAT, SAT, and baseline data are used through the supervision and evaluation process to improve instruction. There was no other specific evidence of data used for instructional improvements. When there is a sufficient administrative support available to support the current research-based evaluation and supervision process, this process will tighten the focus on improved student learning.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 6

Conclusions

The organization of time mostly supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students. Faculty members report that the master schedule is continuously reviewed and tweaked. Starting in the spring, recommendations are made by teachers for student placement. Eighth grade teachers meet with the ninth grade teachers during PLC time. Currently, the Westbrook High School daily schedule consists of students enrolled in eight classes with only six class periods meeting each day. The day is broken into a morning rotation which meets three of four morning classes and then an afternoon rotation which meets three out of four afternoon classes. The day begins with two 46-minute periods. These are followed by two 77-minute block periods. The day ends with two more 46-minute periods. Each of the eight classes will meet between 215 and 246 minutes each week, based on the four-day rotation schedule. The two lunch waves (20 minutes each) are incorporated into the second block. The 46-minute periods work well for performance tasks, comprehensive assessments, close reading, short reflections, and introducing new topics. In the English, history, and math departments, teacher schedules are aligned to allow time during every school day for professional collaboration. Some interdisciplinary collaboration occurs amongst the departments. The principal explained that next year, co-teaching will take place across the content areas, including electives.

Department-based professional learning community (PLC) groups meet once per month after school. Contractually, these meetings must last until 3:30 p.m.; however, on occasion, they may run longer. Topics and information for PLC meetings are disseminated through monthly PLC leader meetings with the principal and the leaders of each department's PLC group. In addition, the school has six school-wide PLC meetings each year; these school-wide meetings are similar to faculty meetings. The school-wide PLC meetings differ from faculty meetings in the respect that school-wide PLCs are more focused on student work and faculty meetings may be used to address more general community issues affecting the school.

Flexible time for students during the school day is limited, but teachers indicate that students can come to them before and after school for extra help. There is an academic assistance classroom in which students needing additional support can participate. The schedule and course offerings also allow for reading lab, writing lab, and math lab for those students who need additional support within the school day. Students have the opportunity to take part in independent studies, through which they are able to create their own focus. Student advisory council and advisory also allow for some student personalization and voice. When common planning time is consistently available to all staff, more formal discussions about curriculum and student achievement will be supported.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- teachers
- students

Standard 5 Indicator 7

Conclusions

In most cases, student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. Westbrook High School is unique in that the school maintains small class sizes. Currently, the largest class size in a core subject area is 24 students, found in geometry and forensic science classes. The average class size for each department is as follows: English, 15.2; social studies, 16.3; mathematics, 15.2; science, 13.9; world languages, 11.2; technology education, 6.9; music, 10.9; health, 17.1; physical education, 11.9; art, 8.8; family and consumer science, 10.8; and business, 6.4. Each full-time teacher averages five classes per semester, with few exceptions. Student load varies widely among departments and within them. In classroom observations, class sizes varied from approximately 3 to 24. In college prep geometry, for example, one class was comprised of eight students, while another had an enrollment of twenty.

Teachers express they are able to meet the needs of their diverse learners. Class sizes are kept small, which allows for more individual attention. When class size is large, teachers support the needs of the individual student by collaborating with members of the support staff that may be assigned to their class. Teachers are able to personalize learning and individualize based on student need. According to the Endicott survey, an overwhelming majority of students (85 percent) believe that class sizes are reasonable; staff (90 percent) believe that student load and class size allow for individualized attention; and parents (89 percent) believe that their students have the opportunity to enroll in classes with varying levels of ability and that their class sizes allow for individualized attention (87 percent). When class sizes are more evenly distributed, students' individual learning experiences will be more equitable.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teachers
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Indicator 8

Conclusions

The principal provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, as much as time will allow. The principal models a safe and secure environment so that students are engaged in their learning; she displays a positive and upbeat personality by greeting students by first name as well as noticing and addressing students. The principal collaborates routinely with all stakeholders, for example, the evaluation of leveling of classes. The standard level classes were removed and replaced with college prep level courses which were supported with additional courses. These decisions were made based on the needs of students. Allowing students to have a say in the learning process, the principal used the advisory class to gauge student interest and feedback. Beyond her scheduled teacher meetings earlier in the year and her morning check-in with staff and students, time on the principal's calendar is blocked off to allow for teacher observations during the week. The principal facilitates monthly faculty meetings for an hour after school as well as monthly school-wide PLC meetings for all teachers. These meetings serve as an opportunity to disperse information, gather data, provide feedback, and build positive school culture.

There is a heavy emphasis on school climate, athletics, and co-curricular activities. Students' academic success is highlighted through honor roll and National Honor Society. The SPIRIT school motto is posted throughout the school and students are able to articulate the meaning as well as the 21st century learning expectations, core values, and beliefs. The principal's time is often fragmented, due to the multiple hats she wears as the sole administrator. For example, some days the principal's time is taken up by handling conflicts, covering classes, attending concerts, attendance, covering PPTs, supporting teachers, and handling parent complaints. These responsibilities, necessary to the smooth operation of the building, have a direct impact on her ability to provide regular and timely instructional leadership. When the principal has additional administrative support to focus on supporting teachers' instructional practices that are rooted in the school's core values, beliefs and learning expectations, there will be positive outcomes for all students.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teachers
- department leaders
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 9

Conclusions

Teachers, students, and parents are involved in informal roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership. The principal indicated she promotes an open door policy, and the parents indicated that their voices are heard. The principal noted that she likes to have face-to-face conversations with her staff. Parents are in constant communication with the school community, through emails, PowerSchool, and Google Classroom. The PTSO, athletic boosters, music boosters, and Project Graduation are four organizations that give parents the opportunity to support student activities. Freshman orientation and open house events are held at the beginning of each school year, giving parents the opportunity to meet each of their students' teachers and to ask questions regarding curriculum and expectations. Parent-teacher conferences are held two times each year.

The school also encourages parents to request additional meetings, beyond the bi-annual conferences, with teachers, support staff (school psychologist, guidance counselors, and school social worker), and/or the building administrator to address student progress and adjustments in educational plans. Teachers expressed they have a voice based on the needs of their particular content areas and indicated that they receive support from the administration when in need of materials and professional development. The student council involvement is also apparent in the hallways and as an aspect of the school environment. Surveys are used periodically, e.g., the library/media specialist indicated that she sent one to the staff to collect information on how to improve the library/media center. The Endicott survey was also given to the school community. Teachers indicated that the PLCs are a major component of the decisions made within the school. When a more formalized structure with defined roles exists for all stakeholders in the decision-making process, it will promote an increased responsibility as well as shared ownership.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teachers
- department leaders
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 10

Conclusions

Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning. Teachers indicated they are active members in the school's curriculum and revision process, both during the school year and over the summer. Teachers were trained in restorative practices, and Google Classroom teachers are able to pursue different professional development opportunities that suit their needs. This is discussed during beginning of the year goal-setting meetings. Teachers also state that they are supported in terms of professional development opportunities in which they are interested. A lead-teacher acts as a support to the principal. In addition, there is a PLC facilitator for each department. Most staff feel comfortable going to the principal to discuss school issues. The principal makes an effort to build the capacity of staff, so that they can feel empowered to facilitate school change. Because of the demonstrated leadership of WHS teachers, students benefit from many initiatives that impact their engagement.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- department leaders
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 11

Conclusions

The school board, superintendent, and principal are consistently collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. The school board states that they work in collaboration with the administrative team. The superintendent sends Saturday emails to the school board with upcoming events and school-wide happenings. They report having a great working relationship with one another and are in support of each other's needs. The Westbrook Board of Education meets once per month and the principal and superintendent attend these meetings. Minutes of all board meetings are public domain and can be found on the school district's website. There is also a district administrative council meeting twice per month, which includes the superintendent, the principals of the three district schools, the district business manager, the IT coordinator, the athletic director, and the district director of special services. The superintendent's office, middle school, and high school all share the same building, which allows for almost daily contact that lends itself well to consistent collaboration. To further assist with the 21st century learning expectations, there is a district school climate council which meets five times per year and a wellness committee which meets bimonthly. Each are attended by the high school principal, superintendent, and a board of education representative which further supports collaboration and reflection. Because the school board, superintendent, and principal are consistently collaborative, reflective, and constructive, WHS has strong support for the implementation of 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- school board
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 12

Conclusions

The school board and superintendent consciously provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. As indicated on page 5 of the principal job description, "the principal will provide leadership and direction for developing the best possible learning/teaching environment." The school board has been supportive of the principal and decisions made. For example, graduation awards were given at graduation and a shift was made to give awards on a separate night. The decision was made by reviewing the core values and how they applied to the situation. In the May 2016 Endicott survey, staff (72.5 percent) and parents (74.6 percent) agree that the principal has the authority to make decisions regarding educational initiatives, scheduling and course offerings, professional development, and the safety and security of students, staff, and the building as a whole. The principal and central office staff indicated a strong collaborative relationship in regard to decision-making. The principal stated that she is supportive of the teaching and learning needs of her staff as well as the learning expectations. Through formal and informal meetings, she is able to provide feedback and reinforcement in these areas.

The school board unanimously approved WHS's revised core values, beliefs, and learning expectations in April 2017, as well as the addition of two graduation requirements: the electronic portfolios by which student performance and progress is communicated to parents, and the senior seminar through which students have the opportunity to engage in 21st century learning and authentic assessments. The superintendent and the school board also collectively supported and funded the purchase and implementation of a 1:1 Chromebook program by which every student in the high school is provided with his/her own Chromebook to ensure access to informational technology and enhance student success. Because the school board and superintendent consciously provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school, this results in positive outcomes that meet the needs of all students.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- school board
- school leadership

Standard 5 Commendations

Commendation

The conscious and continuous building of a culture that is safe, positive, respectful, and supportive

Commendation

The formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school, who knows the student well and assists them

Commendation

The consistent collaboration among the school board, superintendent, and principal that is reflective and constructive

Commendation

The dedication the principal brings to maintaining a warm and supportive environment for staff and students

Standard 5 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop a more formal PLC structure to incorporate data analysis

Recommendation

Deliver more formalized feedback to staff that emphasizes research-based practices and effective instruction

Recommendation

Provide additional administrative support to focus on building operations that will allow for the principal to focus on instructional leadership

Recommendation

Review and revise the master schedule and contributing factors as well as monitoring after the fact to ensure class sizes and teacher loads are more equitable

Standard 6 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The school has timely strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations; coordinated and directive intervention frequently appear in some areas.

Westbrook High School (WHS) has both formal and informal processes to ensure that intervention strategies for at-risk students are timely, coordinated, and directive.The Endicott survey shows that 87 percent of the staff, 66 percent of the parents, and 50 percent of the students agree that WHS has timely strategies to support student achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. WHS, a small learning community of about 250 students, has a staff that states they know their students and their needs well. This leads to interventions that address student needs in an informal manner, often swift, but not necessarily systematic. According to the teachers and teacher leaders, at-risk student needs are met through rapid and informal communications that occur as check-ins or pop-ins. The school social worker discussed that they would not wait for a student assistance team (SAT) meeting to intervene for an at-risk student to receive support and services, in reference to their commitment to their students' well-being. Students have access to and benefit from the services provided by the support staff as well as the general education staff. Through the extensive and proactive climate work in partnership between students and staff, the students feel empowered to approach trusted adults and staff to advocate for their own needs, as evidenced by the student interactions and interviews.

According to the self-study, once students are identified as needing support and/or intervention strategies, a meeting takes place to discuss the appropriate measures in the least restrictive environment. At the high school level, the student is an integral part of the decision team. It is WHS's goal to engage students in their own learning, foster self-advocacy, and encourage independence. This is further supported by the student interviews which revealed that students feel empowered to reach out for support. The school has a student assistance team (SAT) that meets monthly, as discussed in the support services interviews, and students are referred to the team via teacher recommendation. The self-study notes that the SAT team process needs to become more systematic.

Services are coordinated through the SAT team, guidance department, referrals from general education teachers, PPTs, 504 meetings, and parent meetings. Support staff and lead teachers report that additional and support math and reading classes are assigned to students identified through assessment data. These classes are taken in conjunction with traditional English and math courses, with the focus on supplementing and complementing the curriculum and core coursework to give students access to remediation concurrently with their grade-level coursework. Both general education and special education students can use the academic support rooms, which offer small group or one-to-one tutoring and support as needed. While the academic support area is open to all students, students are assigned if they are identified through SAT meetings, guidance counselors, student self-referral, teachers and/or parents. Other students have a 504, IEP, EL identification, or other identified disability with a specific plan and purpose for attending. Direct instruction for reading, writing and math skills is provided during designated periods and in small groups and were observed during classroom observations and student shadowing. Small groups for student social-emotional skills are run by support staff, including the school social worker and the student assistance counselor to address varying student and staff concerns. School support staff are accessible and responsive to the needs of students and families, coordinating efforts with local, community providers as needed.

Special education teachers report that the school provides a variety of directive services for at-risk students. For example, the home base program was described by teachers as a Tier 3 intervention. Students are referred by PPT or SAT team and may also be placed in the program if there is unexpected need, e.g., poor attendance due to illness or school refusal. The special education teacher works with students to ensure that, despite identification or social-emotional needs, students have access to the curriculum. While the goal is to have students work in their classrooms, the home base program provides a safe space for students to keep up with school work, if they are not able to work or are disrupting the general education room. WHS offers these directive services for all at-risk students.

There are steps to ensure that services are coordinated effectively. The SAT is scheduled to meet monthly, but will meet more if needed. The members of the SAT consist of the principal, the school nurse, guidance counselors, school psychologist, school social worker, and a special education teacher. Student support services recognize a need to involve classroom teachers in the process. Furthermore, the support service personnel provide informal follow-up constantly on their students. However, it was noted that prior to referral to SAT, there is no structured opportunity for content teachers to discuss academic and behavioral concerns of students.

The close community allows teachers to quickly identify and provide services for students; when formal intervention practices are implemented for all students, including identified and at-risk students, each student can achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school frequently provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services. WHS effectively communicates with students and families in a variety of ways. In the parent meeting, members referenced the resources on the website, notices sent home, information provided at open house, and the use of PowerSchool and Google Classroom. They stated that guidance staff are very accessible, be it by phone or email. The self-study references the link on the school's website to the special services department connecting to multiple resources to obtain further information on the needs of students with disabilities. In addition, a catalog of WHS academic courses under the guidance tab informs parents of the class offerings. They can find financial information and tips regarding the college process. The special services department presents myriad information to parents to enhance and increase their understanding and presence in their children's programming. Included are links to the Connecticut State Department of Education website and other sites which offer data to assist parents to more actively and knowledgeably participate in the PPT process and advocate for their children.

The support staff at WHS use a small variety of informal strategies to gather data on their supports to ensure that they are meeting the needs of all students and families. The school social worker and the school counselors noted the SAT team meets monthly or as needed for planning to support students. Follow-up is shared across the team, due to the small size of the school. The WHS staff recognizes the need to work on a formal method for tracking and documenting this work in order to use data effectively to address student needs.

Parent feedback is gathered during parent meetings that occur when the staff can get the parents in to discuss the needs of particular students. Further informal assessments of services consist of individual sessions with students, consulting with teachers on getting students connected with tutoring or into the after-school homework program, also depending on what the need is, connecting with Westbrook Youth and Family Services and other providers in the community. The school social worker also stated she meets with families and has conversations to assess need for services or adjustments to services to connect the kids to the community and families as much as possible. Because of the school's efforts to communicate with families in a variety of ways, families, especially those most in need, are aware of available support services.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- parents
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website

Standard 6 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The support services staff informally uses technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student. According to the self-study, the special services department uses IEP Direct, an online program to maintain records for the students identified with disabilities of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), progress on goals and objectives, and planning and placement team (PPT) meetings. Recently, those with a 504 designation have been added to the database. Odysseyware is an online credit recovery program available to students identified as in need of courses toward graduation requirements. STAR assessments in reading are available online to gather baseline levels and used for progress monitoring. ALEKS, an online math intervention program, is a support for students struggling in math. Conover is an online program that assesses workplace skills and career areas of interest. Staff members cited the school's 1:1 Chromebook program as an opportunity for all staff to engage with digital work and feedback with their students. Student support staff use Naviance, Google Classroom, the online portfolios, and PowerSchool to deliver and coordinate services. The school nurse logs all student visits and concerns in PowerSchool immediately after seeing individual students for direct services.

The technology available to staff to provide services to students as necessary is adequate. An assistive technology position was added recently to assist in identifying and implementing appropriate technologies for individual student-specific technology needs. While the school is well-equipped to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student across the school, the need for technology support in this area exceeds the existing full-time district director of informational technology (IT) and one district IT support staff person. As a result, when issues arise, they are not always addressed in a timely manner. The district IT director indicated that teachers reach out for assistance in an informal process that he tracks himself. These interactions often happened in passing in the hall, and there is a mutual desire for improved communication between IT staff and school personnel to formalize the process of documenting technology issues. While there is adequate technology, a systematic protocol to get technical support in a timely manner will ensure the various technologies are utilized effectively and efficiently.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teachers
- central office personnel
- school support staff
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 4

Conclusions

School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who deliver an informal written, developmental program; meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling; engage in individual and group meetings with all students; deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers; and use ongoing, relevant assessment data in a limited manner, including informal feedback.

Counselors, students, and parents state that the amount of time the guidance counselors work with students is sufficient. Counselors meet with students as individuals, in classes, and in advisory. Counselors have an open door policy and encourage students to advocate for themselves. Students state they are comfortable seeking out a counselor when needed. The amount of time counselors spend with individual students depends on the grade level of the student and the time of year. The guidance staff indicates that they commit about 30 percent of the year to juniors, 30 percent of the year to seniors, and the remaining time to work with freshmen and sophomores. These numbers do not refer to a single chunk of time, but an overall estimate of their commitments to students throughout the year. According to the Endicott survey, 87.5 percent of the staff, 66.2 percent of the parents, and 50.2 percent of the students agree that students have access to and benefit from the services provided by the support staff, as well as the general education staff.

According to the counselors, there is an adequate number of counselors, two for the approximately 250 students. However, these counselors have other roles that take them away from their counseling duties, such as test coordinator and Early College Experience (ECE) coordinator. In speaking with the guidance counselors, these roles take up much of the counselors' time, increasing each year.

The counselors said that they spend 20 percent of their time on course selection, 10 percent of their time on personal counseling, 50 percent on post-high school planning, and 15 percent on special education services. They stated that they do not conduct any group counseling in part because of scheduling and in part because of other services offered in the school by Westbrook Youth and Family Services and the school psychologist. The counselors also stated that the time spent on crisis intervention was fluid, approximately 5 percent, as it happens on an as-needed basis.

The guidance counselors and student support services do not have a formal written curriculum. They indicate that they have a comprehensive developmental program and that they need to work on a formal curriculum with the curriculum lead teacher. The WHS self-study states the school counseling department consistently and thoughtfully delivers a comprehensive, developmental program and is presently working to update and document this ever-evolving program in a written curriculum. This curriculum will reflect a different developmental focus at each grade level. This practice is evidenced through the submission of a binder of activities that the counselors describe as their first iteration of a developmental guidance curriculum. During the ninth grade, the focus is on transition to high school, as well as discovering one's academic strengths. Tenth and eleventh grades concentrate on career and college exploration. During the twelfth grade, the focus is on post-secondary opportunities and career planning with an emphasis on the college application process.

According to the self-study, counselors effectively utilize the social studies classes for freshman transition lessons and study skills, sophomore career planning lessons, and junior year presentations on PSAT, career interest profiler, and college/post secondary planning presentations. These lessons focus on high school success plans, college and career planning, and the introduction and exploration of the Naviance program. In addition to the classroom presentations and individual meetings with students, some of the components of the developmental guidance program are delivered throughout the advisory program.

Guidance counselors report that they plan book-ended presentations throughout the year that include an evening program for parents with topics and activities that correspond with daytime student presentations. This allows for a unified message to reach the students and parents. Both guidance counselors stated: "What we do in the

classroom, we do for the parents."

The guidance staff does not use the school-wide rubrics, stating that everything guidance does is geared for future plans. They also stated they would like to be more involved with 8th grade students and their families earlier in the school year, when they are beginning to decide on their high school plans.

The guidance counselors explained that at the end of each year they survey the seniors, asking how well the guidance office supported them. While, in the past, they asked for formal parent feedback at the end of sessions and programs they provided, they have not done so recently, relying on verbal feedback as they mingle after an event or through the parent-teacher student organization (PTSO). The counselors adjust guidance services based on feedback. For example, they stated that because students surveyed indicated that they would like more opportunities to talk about jobs and careers directly after high school, the counselors now offer students the ability to attend the Old Saybrook high school career expo.

When the school counseling department provides a formal developmental guidance curriculum aligned to state standards, all students will benefit.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teachers
- parents
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 5

Conclusions

The school's health service have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who extensively provide preventative health services and direct intervention services; use an appropriate referral process; deliberately conduct ongoing student health assessments; but does not use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

The school nurse provides direct intervention, citing daily services such as headaches and cold symptoms. According to the self-study, students in the school population who have concussions are monitored by the school nurse. It is the health office's responsibility to manage the plan, accommodations and/or modifications necessary for academic and sports programs. Parents and coaches both referred to the helpfulness of the staff in the health office. The nurse also cited preventative services such as reviewing annual health updates and following up on any discrepancies or deficiencies. She reminds families when students need physicals and immunizations and assists families with finding providers, if needed. The district has a medical advisor with whom the nurse consults when there are health concerns that exceed the school's reach. With parent permission, the nurse will call doctor's offices and arrange services for students in need.

The staffing is adequate to meet the needs of the student population for the services they provide to both high school and middle school students. However, both she and the counselors stated that there is a need for more hours prior to the school year so that the nurse can review the health updates in a more timely manner. This is evidenced by the fact that, in mid-October, the school nurse was just finishing up with reviewing health screenings. The health office is adequate for privacy and confidential meetings, according to the nursing staff. Students who are seeking services during the day write their their names and reasons for visits upon a paper sign sheet. All students have access to this form.

There is a committee, health assessment meeting (HAM), that meets three to four times a year consisting of the superintendent, director of special education, elementary school nurse, middle/high school nurse, athletic director, and athletic trainer to discuss health concerns and anything of which this group needs to be aware. The middle and high school nurse set the HAM agenda. This team meets to discuss changing policies and standing orders to accommodate needs and trends, for example, addressing the potential need for Narcan, given current trends in southeastern Connecticut. However, there is little evidence of data or community feedback being used to improve services.

When WHS health services certified/licensed personnel and support staff use feedback from the community to improve services, they will ensure that the students have access to health services to ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- parents
- school support staff

Standard 6 Indicator 6

Conclusions

Library/media services are sporadically integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and inadequate number of support staff who are infrequently engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum; provide a range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum; ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school; are informally responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning; occasionally conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

The school library/media specialist (LMS) attempts to integrate library/media services into the school curriculum by her occasional attendance of various PLC meetings and informally stopping into classrooms. The LMS collaborates with teachers in order to integrate information skills into classroom curriculum and provides a wide variety of resources in various formats for both research and personal interests of students and staff. She often co-teaches with colleagues on topics such as, but not limited to, digital citizenship, reliable sources, proper citations, and video production. The LMS supplemented the curriculum for the life skills students through a video project during which they made a commercial for the popcorn they sell as a fundraiser. In addition, the LMS has created a website, a brochure, and a Twitter account, all geared to inform various audiences of the offerings and events in the library/media center. Based on the Endicott survey, 62.5 percent of the staff agree the LMS is actively engaged in the development and implementation of the school's curriculum, occurring mostly in health, social studies, and English classes.

The library/media center is a welcoming environment for students and faculty to pursue 21st century learning. The students stated they are comfortable going to the library/media center to print or to ask the library/media specialist a question about how to find or use resources. Parents also noted that their children feel comfortable asking the LMS for help. A social studies teacher discussed the library/media specialist's help in teaching students to use databases for a research project. Teachers and staff indicated that they feel their facilities are adequate to meet the needs of the student population as well as the curricular and instructional programs. The Endicott survey supported this, as over 65 percent of parents, 67 percent of students, and 75 percent of staff surveyed believe that "the library provides a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum." The library/media specialist maintains a website for students and staff which includes access to links for research databases (Destiny library catalog and Westbrook Public Library); services for source citations (Knight Cite and Easy Bib); and the UCONN/ECE library. The library/media specialist also maintains an online patron access catalog (OPAC) and provides inter-library loan services with libraries around the state facilitated via the Westbrook Public Library.

Teachers and the library/media specialist report sufficient funding for print and non-print materials, equipment, maintenance, and repair. Currently, the library/media center has a total of 10,764 print resources and 400 DVD/VHS tapes. The library/media center contains six desktop computers for student use and one computer to access the Destiny library catalog and OPAC. There is one black and white and one color printer. The library/media center also houses a photocopier for student use. In an effort to provide more resources and to make the library/media center more user friendly, a PSAT/SAT/ACT area for students was created.

The teachers discussed the recent roll out of 1:1 Chromebooks as a recently implemented technology that is used for library/media access in an attempt to meet the needs of the 21st century learning expectations. In addition, there is a new computer lab for all students to access in the library/media center, which is often accessed by the teen leadership classes. In addition, the LMS recently received new video equipment to support the video class and individual student projects.

The library/media specialist stated she surveyed students and faculty. As a result of the survey, the LMS created a student supply table, reading nook, class instruction area, and a PSAT and SAT area, as well as a professional

resource section for the staff. The library/media center is open from 7:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m., and the LMS will stay beyond those hours if someone requests it. She has no support staff to assist her with daily library/media center management or monitoring student behavior. The LMS is actively engaged with the school community and strives to work collaboratively to provide resources.

When additional support staff to supervise and take care of clerical/technological library tasks exists, the LMS will become a more active partner in curriculum support, further improve services, and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 7

Conclusions

Support services for identified students, including special education, section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who informally collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations; often provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students; and sporadically perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Based on the Endicott survey, 85 percent of the staff and 72.5 percent of parents agree that there are adequate certified licensed support personnel to address the needs of WHS students. Additionally, 87.5 percent of the staff agrees that support services personnel collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff to achieve the school's learning expectations.

WHS has adequate number of support staff employed to provide services to their identified students. The district has one full-time director who oversees the two certified special education teachers at the high school who provide direct instruction, inclusion, and resource room support. In addition, they supervise the two resource rooms which also service the 504, English language learners (ELL) and scientific research-based intervention (SRBI) students with the help of two instructional tutors, and three paraprofessionals. In addition, there is one certified life skills teacher with three paraprofessionals. This teacher is also the coordinator of the Unified Sports team. A fourth member of the team is the special educator responsible for the social emotional/behavioral students. WHS also has a certified transition coordinator who works with students who are ready for vocational experiences and students who require programming through the age of 21. Other certified personnel who are part of the special services department are two guidance counselors, one school psychologist, one social worker (shared with the district), one student assistance counselor, and Westbrook Youth and Family Services counselors. The district also provides an occupational therapist, physical therapist, and speech and language teachers who report to WHS on a case-by-case basis. The school also has language teachers who provide services on a case-by-case basis.

Communication and collaboration between and among teachers, counselors, target support services, and other support services personnel is effective, but not consistently by design. The support staff do not attend the PLC meetings with each department. Staff members indicate that there is a plan is to move toward more intentional inclusion of support staff at content area PLCs in the 2017-2018 school year, although, in 2016-2017, informal participation did occur. PLC meetings, monthly faculty meetings, and 1:1 meetings with teachers, serve as time and opportunity to collaborate between the special education and general education teachers. Time is carved out as needed to ensure that all students are receiving the support they need. Furthermore, special education teachers collaborate directly with general education teachers regularly to modify work, provide accommodations, and differentiate for all types of learners.

Teachers, school leaders, including teacher leaders, and support staff noted that informal and quick collaborations occur often and in response to student needs. Communication is open and fluid. The self-study and panel presentation both delineated the formal student assistance team (SAT) process and documentation as an area of growth for WHS. The SAT meets monthly and comprises support staff and school administration. The support staff acknowledges a need to embed classroom teachers in the SAT work as well.

At-risk students are offered services that are inclusive in nature. A special education teacher provides co-teaching support in all content areas, and support personnel, paraprofessionals, and tutors provide support within classrooms for those in need according to their IEP. Students identified, per assessment data, are offered supplemental math and reading courses to support their growth in those areas. In addition, two academic support rooms are staffed by special education teachers and paraprofessionals. Both of these options are also available to general education students who require extra support, offering an inclusive environment for students to get the support that they need. The special education teacher indicates that the life skills classroom is the home base for

her students, who work on reading and math there, and these students participate in Unified Sports and all elective courses.

Forms of data to guide services include sporadic and unsystematic surveys administered to staff and students to assess needs for services. Some support staff use student feedback forms on the assignments through which students can self-assess and provide feedback to the special education teacher on their learning experience. The self-study notes feedback from the school community and general education teachers, and standardized assessments are used to ensure that all students are progressing along the learning continuum. Support staff work with the general education faculty to administer a variety of assessments to monitor students' progress throughout the year. They also score all students on various school-wide rubrics, depending on their content area.

The panel presentation and self-study delineated one area of need as a formal documentation system to monitor SRBI strategies for student progress, and this is supported by the teacher interviews and classroom visits. Endicott survey results indicate that 72.5 percent of the staff agrees that support personnel are using assessment data, including feedback from school community to improve services and to achieve the school's learning expectations.

The school responds to the support staffing needs of their population as evidenced by a French teacher getting her TESOL certification and shifting to teaching a class for identified EL students. This was done in response to demographic data on a growing EL population for WHS. The second guidance counselor position has been increased to a 1.0 full-time employee (FTE) from a .4 FTE and then .8 FTE over the past years. The guidance staff noted this was in direct response to the many demands on the department, including assessments. When a formal process exists to use relevant data, it will ensure ongoing and systematic assessment of student progress and will support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 6 Commendations

Commendation

The strength of the school climate work as a proactive strategy to address needs of students and school community, especially with the student leadership component

Commendation

The willingness of staff to collaborate

Commendation

The accessibility of staff and counselors to communicate with students and parents

Standard 6 Recommendations

Recommendation

Design and implement a formal SRBI including documentation and follow up

Recommendation

Implement formal scheduled meetings for grade-level teachers to discuss and address student needs

Recommendation

Design and implement a plan to include support staff (library/media specialist and special education personnel) attendance at content meetings and potential grade-level meetings

Recommendation

Include general education teachers as a regular part of the student assistance team

Recommendation

Provide staffing in the library/media center to support more integration of the library/media specialist's services into curriculum

Standard 7 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The community and the district's governing body consistently provide dependable funding for a wide range of school programs and services, sufficient professional and support staff, ongoing professional development and curriculum revision, a full range of technology support, sufficient equipment, and sufficient instructional materials and supplies. The Town of Westbrook passes its budget each year through a town meeting. The board of education's annual budget has increased an average of 2.49 percent over the last seven years. The town has provided almost one million dollars through bonding to address improvements such as resurfacing the outdoor track, upgrades to the gym, replacement of all windows, and upgrading the auditorium. Home base and life skills special education programs were recently added to the high school. The professional staff and support staff are sufficient. The overall student-to-teacher ratio is 12:1 and, in core classes, it is 14:1. Some faculty noted that the principal is frequently unavailable to them as a resource for instructional support. As the sole administrator in the building, she handles all disciplinary or building management issues. WHS has moved to restorative practices which are in line with their school climate initiative. As part of this work peace circles are being implemented to deal with student conflict and discipline. The principal said the use of peace circles has been effective, however, the process is time-intensive.The district is committed to dependable funding for ongoing professional development and curriculum revision and employs a curriculum lead teacher that coordinates curriculum revision. The budget indicates that professional development funds have slightly increased over the past three years. Support staff reported that they always are able to receive professional development as needed. Recently, the district has funded extensive training for restorative practices, school climate improvement, and DCF reporting procedures. Teachers reported that they have never been told "no," when requesting professional development opportunities.

The school is supported by an information technology (IT) director and an IT technician. The building implemented a 1:1 computer program that was rolled out in the 2017-2018 school year, and the IT director reported that there have been no problems with the roll out so far. The district and the community provides consistent support for technology in the high school, and the school has sufficient equipment. The IT director has a five-year rotation plan for hardware replacements. The building PLC leaders stated that they have sufficient funding for all needed materials and supplies and feel supported if they need any resources. With the additional administrative support, the dependable funding provided by the board of education and the Westbrook community supports achievement of the school's 21st learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- facility tour
- teachers
- parents
- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership

Standard 7 Indicator 2

Conclusions

By design, the school develops, plans, and funds programs to ensure the proper maintenance and repair of the building and school plant to maintain, catalogue and replace equipment, and to keep the school clean on a daily basis.

The infrastructure is maintained and upgraded and equipment is sustained and replaced according to need. Renovations have been made to areas of the building and maintenance is consistent and ongoing. Parents, students, and teachers indicate that the school is clean and well maintained. The head custodian has scheduled weekly meetings with the principal, and occasionally the superintendent, to review the plan for building maintenance. Custodians and private contractors are responsible for the general maintenance of the plant. Documents provided by the head custodian show annual service contracts for the generator, boiler, fire equipment, and sprinkler system. Items in need of repair are submitted electronically to the plant operations manager. Teachers indicate that most repairs are completed quickly, but some repairs can take longer to complete. Ordinary upkeep of the building and grounds is performed according to annual schedules.

Capital improvement for purchases over $10,000 requires town approval. Westbrook High School can incur capital expenditures under $10,000. All major school facilities equipment is inventoried and cataloged by the plant operations manager and the school's business manager. Individual departments are responsible for cataloging their own equipment. The custodial staff at Westbrook High School comprises one full-time plant operations manager, one .5 FTE maintenance worker, split with the middle school, and a .5 FTE custodian during the day from 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. In the evenings, from 3:00 to 11:00 p.m., there are 3.25 FTE custodians. Classroom and cafeteria furniture are cleaned, repaired, or replaced as deemed necessary on an annual basis as part of the operations manager's plan. Because of the school's compliance with safety regulations, cleanliness, and maintenance, conditions are conducive for effective teaching and learning and for the school to attain its strategic goals.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- central office personnel
- school support staff

Standard 7 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The Westbrook community funds and Westbrook High School implements a long-range plan that addresses most programs and services, enrollment changes, staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements. The district has a three-year written plan for capital projects. This plan is supported by the board of education and is created in conjunction with town government. Technology services has a plan where all equipment is replaced in a five-year rotation. While Westbrook Public Schools does not have a formal long-range plan for programs and services, it handles them on an annual and/or as-needed basis. In the 2016 Endicott survey, 88 percent of staff and 77 percent of parents feel that the community provides dependable funding for programs and services.

Staffing is generally addressed annually to adjust district needs concerning enrollment. In 2014-2015, the board of education (BOE) contracted with the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) to execute an enrollment study along with a BOE subcommittee and other stakeholders to study demographics for the district. Currently, the school district, along with other Connecticut districts, is going through declining enrollment. Their projections estimate that WHS will have 33 to 50 percent fewer students by 2020. However, the current enrollment reflects 40-50 students more than these stated projections, and staff has not been reduced at this point.

The maintenance budget has remained consistent and well-funded for a number of years. According to the 2016 Endicott survey, 73 percent of students, 95 percent of parents, and 90 percent of staff feel the building is clean and well maintained. In addition, 85 percent of staff feel repairs are completed in a timely manner, and 93 percent of parents believe the school facilities are conducive to education. In conversations with various stakeholders, including parents, staff, PLC leaders, and administrators, there are no concerns related to the sources of funding that are identified. As a result of the dependable funding, the community is providing the resources and facilities to support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- parents
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Faculty and building administrators are directly involved in the development and implementation of the budget across the school. The principal develops the budget with staff input around mid-October each year. Professional learning community (PLC) leaders are provided with budget proposal forms to complete with cost requests for the upcoming budget year. Those requests are reviewed by the principal and then submitted to the business manager and superintendent. The superintendent and business manager then meet with the principal to review proposed budget. It is presented to the board of education, which then holds a public budget workshop. The board of education votes on the budget which is then submitted to the town board of finance, which conducts a public hearing. Following the public hearing, the budget is finalized at a town meeting or via referendum.

Some teachers are unaware of the budget process and indicated their department budget is the same year after year. However, PLC leaders report that they review department needs and budget requests at their monthly department PLC meetings each cycle. The staff and administrators believe their opinions during the budget process are valued which, in turn, offers high quality educational opportunities for students. As a result of an inclusive budgetary process, teachers and building administrators believe their opinions are valued which facilitates the delivery of high quality educational opportunities for students.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- central office personnel

Standard 7 Indicator 5

Conclusions

The school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services in most areas. The Westbrook High School building is now in its 60th year. While a fairly old structure, WHS maintenance and custodial staff take excellent care of the building and grounds. In the Endicott survey, 77 percent of students believe the school's facility adequately supports its programs and services. In addition, 87 percent of staff agree the school's physical plant and site supports the delivery of high quality programs and services, and 93 percent of parents agree the school's physical plant is conducive to education. With the exception of a few areas, WHS has adequate space in classrooms to accommodate class sizes. All science rooms are well equipped and large enough to have desk space and labs in the same room. In the business department, classroom space is large enough to have both desk-work area and a computer lab.

WHS and Westbrook Middle School are joined buildings and the schools share nursing quarters. The school's nursing quarter is located at the main intersection of the two buildings and is equipped with separated beds with privacy curtains, a separate office for the school nurse, a large locked walk-in closet for medical storage, and a small reception area; however it does not contain a separate treatment area. The school psychologist was just given a new and improved office space this school year that meets the needs of her responsibilities well. The cafeteria is large enough to adequately host two lunch waves and has access to outdoor seating, weather permitting. The technical education facility is exceptional with a separate wood shop, metal shop, and computer drafting room. The school also has two rooms dedicated to academic support and two heavily used computer labs in addition to the labs in the technology education suite and business education room. There is an office for the student assistance counselor which is shared with Westbrook Youth and Family Services on an alternating day basis. School counseling is equipped with a reception area, an office for each guidance counselor, and a conference room. The family and consumer science classroom is also well equipped with professional level appliances and plenty of space. The art classroom includes a fully equipped darkroom.

In the music department, there are separate facilities for the band and choir. The choir room contains an office, two small practice rooms, one large practice room, and a large storage room for concert dress and the choral music library. However, the band program has out grown the facility. The band room suite includes one rehearsal room, an office, two practice rooms, a large instrument storage room, two small storage closets, and the stage storage room, but due to the popularity of the program and the number of students involved, rehearsal space and storage are not adequate. It cannot handle the volume of the group and prevents, students, and teachers from being able to listen across the ensemble and identify musical elements of the pieces studied. Practically, the space is too small to safely accommodate the number of students with their instruments and the equipment necessary for rehearsal. The teacher reports having to change musical pieces to accommodate the lack of space specifically for percussion instruments. A crowded physical space makes movement in the room difficult. Both storage closets are at maximum capacity, and one of the practice rooms has been lost to additional instrument storage. The stage storage room has to house the music library, concert tuxedos, low brass instruments, percussion instruments, and marching band instruments. This also affects the auditorium stage, because the stage storage room is near maximum capacity. Consequently, stage equipment such as risers, sound shells, keyboards, and other miscellaneous items must be stored on the stage itself. This limits space and accessibility to organizations requesting use of the stage. Adequate storage is also an issue in other places throughout the building; for instance, there are desks stored in the boiler room, and there is difficulty storing equipment in the chemistry room.

The athletic fields are well maintained and easily accessible from the school. The physical education department uses a gymnasium, a classroom, a fitness center, a yoga room, and a cardio room for instruction. As a result of the diligence of the custodial staff and a well-planned program to address ongoing maintenance, faculty members and students teach and learn in a clean, safe facility that contributes to a positive school climate.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- parents
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 6

Conclusions

The school maintains up-to-date documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with fire, health, and safety regulations. It is the responsibility of the plant operations manager to maintain all documentation and to schedule all required inspections from local, state, and federal agencies. The documents are maintained in the manager's office with copies available on request. If any issues have been identified during inspections work, orders are processed in a very timely manner. Westbrook High School's facilities are properly maintained and comply with federal, state, and local laws and regulations. This has helped to ensure that the plant and site adequately support all programs and services. A safe and accessible facility makes certain that all students have access to all of the school's programs and services.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- facility tour
- student work
- central office personnel
- school support staff

Standard 7 Indicator 7

Conclusions

All professional staff at Westbrook High School actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and consistently reach out to families who have been less connected to the school. Teachers, counselors, staff and administrators actively communicate with parents about student success, disciplinary issues, and other school-related issues. These methods include, but are not limited to, phone calls, emails, parent portal updates via PowerSchool, school counseling newsletters, open house, parent and teacher conferences, parent information nights, and Alert Now - a service that enables the school to deliver recorded messages and/or e-mails to its constituents. Teachers are required to phone or email the parents of students whose grades are below a C. Westbrook High School has implemented an electronic student portfolio, but results of this program have not yet been shared with parents. All staff keep a log of any parent contact. The school social worker and school psychologist make home visits as necessary. Teachers collaborate with students, administrative assistants, and school counselors to reach out to parents who otherwise would be less connected to the school. Due to the thoughtful steps that the school makes to connect with and engage parents and families, the school continues to make strides to enlist parents and families as partners in their children's education.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- school board
- department leaders

Standard 7 Indicator 8

Conclusions

Westbrook High School has developed strong parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that effectively support student learning. Business and industry partnerships at the school include summer job training, site visits, in-school presentations, and inter-generational activities. A work study program places students at local businesses including Big Y supermarket, Dunkin Donuts, Stop & Shop, Reeve Landscaping, Oceanside Auto, Saybrook Ford, Nautical Needles, Professional Stone Care, and the Elks Club. The WHS Teen Leadership group was recently recognized at a national conference and received a grant of $5,000 for use in their school climate improvement endeavors and programs. The school counseling department offers trips for students to events such as the Middlesex Community College Manufacturing Day, Hartford College Fair, and the Old Saybrook High School Career Expo for career options. Guidance also brings in representatives from a variety of post education institutions, including colleges and universities, technical schools, and military branches. The Westbrook Foundation and local and civic organizations including Rotary Club, American Legion, music and athletic boosters, PTSO, and student council support WHS substantially through scholarships and awards totaling over $150,000. Students have the opportunity to participate in many programs linked to higher education in order to engage in more advanced learning experiences, all of which reflect the school's core values. Because of partnerships with community resources and outside educational opportunities, all students have access to meaningful, real-world learning beyond the classroom.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel

Standard 7 Commendations

Commendation

The community's consistent and long-standing support of the school district's annual budget as prepared by the superintendent and school board

Commendation

The professional staff's active engagement with parents and families as partners in their students' education

Commendation

The clean, well maintained facility

Commendation

The partnerships within the community for internships and volunteer opportunities for students

Standard 7 Recommendations

Recommendation

Explore creative solutions to provide more storage space for supplies, furniture, and equipment

Recommendation

Provide more administrative support for the building

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

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

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

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

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

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

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

Roster of Team Members

Chair(s)

Chair: Cathy Sosnowski - Avon High School

Assistant Chair: Dr. Erin McGurk - Ellington Public Schools

Team Members

Susan Abbott - Thomaston High School

Charles Buder - Great Path Academy @ Manchester Community College

Jonathan Coe - Plainville High School

Anastasia DiFedele - Dutton - Hartford Public Schools

Sari O'Leary - Cromwell High School

Dawn Olsen - Granby Memorial High School

Martin Pascale - Derby High School

Kathleen Smith - Ledyard High School

Elaine Strobel - New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.

Sharon Veatch - Housatonic Valley Regional High School