



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

VISITING TEAM REPORT

Somers High School

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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

Somers, Connecticut is a 28.7 square mile rural/suburban community in Tolland County with a population of approximately 11,500 which includes 2,269 male inmates at the Osborn Correctional Institution. It is bordered by East Longmeadow and Hampden, Massachusetts to the north, Enfield to the west, Ellington to the south, and Stafford to the east, with the latter three in Connecticut. Settled in 1706, Somers has a rich agricultural history and is home to the Four-Town fair; one of the oldest fairs in the United States.

The median household income in Somers is \$98,846 as compared to the state median income of \$69,460. Thirty-one percent of residents have some college education, 28% have a bachelor's degree or higher, 31% high school graduate, and 11% of residents over 25 years of age have less than high school graduation level.

From 2010 to 2014, it was reported that 4.5% of Somers residents are living below the poverty level, which is lower than the state average of approximately 10.5%. In 2014-2015, 6.8% of students in the district were eligible for free or reduced-priced lunches. Specific to the high school, in 2014-2015, 4.2% of the high school population was eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch. Unlike the state trend, poverty in Somers has decreased since the 2000 Census. The town's major employers are the Connecticut State Prison System, Conval, the Somers Board of Education, and Geissler's Supermarket IGA.

The town's public school district is comprised of three educational facilities situated on a 115-acre campus called the Somers Educational Complex located on Vision Boulevard. This campus also houses the public library and borders the town's main recreational area.

Within the educational complex there are four district schools: Somers Early Start Preschool (located in Somers Elementary School), Somers Elementary School, Mabelle B. Avery Middle School, and Somers High School. Somers High School is a public high school, housing grades 9-12 with a total enrollment of approximately 478 students and 52 faculty members. Of the school's 478 students, 90% identify as Caucasian, 4% as Hispanic/Latino, 2% identify as Asian, 2% identify as Black or African American, and 2% identify as multiracial (belonging to two or more races). Of the 478 students enrolled at the school, 235 are female and 243 are male. Also, 11.51% of all students in the school are identified as special education students and there is one ESL student. Currently, the two-year average dropout rate is less than 1% in Somers. More specifically, the high school's dropout rate over the last four years is an average of .0475%.

For the 2014-2015 school year, Somers' per pupil expenditure was \$14,286, as compared to the state average of \$16,483. By adopting a one-to-one technology program that provides iPads or Chromebooks to every student, in concert with other technological classroom advancements, Somers has worked to provide students with more educational opportunities and the best resources available.

In the 2015-2016 school year, the town of Somers spent 69.9% of its annual budget on public education. The Somers Board of Education receives \$21,463,926 of the town's annual budget of \$30,696,103. This was an increase of \$550,933 or 2.57% from the previous year. A total of 64.5% of the property tax rate goes toward the Somers Board of Education budget.

Somers High School had a graduation rate of 96.9% in 2015 with a drop-out rate of 1%. Students had an absenteeism rate of 18.1%. With regard to post-graduation pathways, 58.7% of the 2016 graduating class entered a four-year university, 18.2% entered a two-year college, and 3.3% entered the military; also, 7.4% entered a career education program, while 12.4% entered the workforce. 81.9% enter college within a year after graduation. This is higher than the state average of 72.7%. Finally, on average teachers were absent 8.7 days (excluding professional days).

Local educational opportunities are also available for students and the greater community through Enfield Adult and Continuing Education. This program serves four area towns including Enfield, Somers, Granby and Suffield providing general education courses. This opportunity provides another pathway for students to earn credits toward a diploma.

Students at Somers High School have several school/college partnership experience options. Through the Early College Experience (ECE) program with the University of Connecticut, Somers High School offers English 12, US History, and Biology. Somers High School is also partnered with Asnuntuck Community College to offer credit in Algebra 2 and Computer Applications 1 and 2. Additionally, students in the Food Service & Management 2 program can currently earn 3 credits at Manchester Community College (MCC). Due to lack of state funds, MCC will regrettably be ending this articulation at the end of the 2016-2017 school year.

Students at Somers High School are honored through national societies including the National Honor Society and the Beta Club. Local recognition programs include the PBIS incentive called "Spartan Bucks," Student of the Month, and the District Art Show. Somers Public Schools is also in partnership with local businesses through the Rotary Interact Club and the ACE Program. The following businesses have cooperative agreements with the Somers High School Transition program, which is designed to prepare special education students who are 18-21 years old to gain life-skills, pre-employment training, and community involvement: Big Y, Ellington, CT., Geissler's supermarket, Foster Hill Farm, Somers Fire Department, YMCA, Loaves and Fishes Soup Kitchen, Somers Elementary School, Mabelle B. Avery Middle School, Flower Power Nursery, Auto-Detailing on-campus business endeavor. Students are paired with local businesses and work in a variety of work experiences within the community and on campus.

Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations

Somers High School Mission

Everyone at Somers High School will work to foster a learning community characterized by academic excellence, intellectual curiosity, creative expression, responsible citizenship, personal growth, and respect for all.

Our shared core values and beliefs about learning:

"The Spartan Code"

At Somers High School, we believe that:

Respect Matters: We appreciate the unique qualities of others, seek to understand different perspectives, and display consideration for all.

Responsibility Matters: We understand and accept the impact and consequences of personal actions and decisions. We take ownership of our learning.

Integrity Matters: We meet high ethical and academic standards; we practice honesty and sincerity in relationships and actions. We do the right thing in and out of the classroom.

Kindness Matters: We demonstrate compassion, concern, and empathy by actively helping others.

Somers High School 21st Century Learning Expectations

Reading: Demonstrate the ability to think critically by reading challenging material and effectively communicating its meaning and usage.

Communication: Demonstrate the skills necessary to effectively communicate through writing and/or speaking.

Problem Solving: Demonstrate critical thinking in problem-solving and reasoning in order to analyze, solve problems, and clearly communicate the solution.

Technology: Demonstrate appropriate use of technology to support communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking.

Creative Expression: Create, perform, and respond to the arts with understanding and recognize the role of the arts in expressing and communicating the human experience.

Civic and Social: Demonstrate positive citizenship to the school community characterized by respect, responsibility, integrity, and kindness.

Related Files

- [2016-09-18-15:07_core-values-and-beliefs.pdf](#)
- [2016-09-18-15:07_21st-cle.pdf](#)
- [2017-02-20-09:18_1-reading-21clerubric.pdf](#)
- [2017-02-20-09:18_5-creativeexpression-21clerubric.pdf](#)
- [2017-02-20-09:18_2-communication-21clerubric.pdf](#)
- [2017-02-20-09:18_4-technology-21clerubric.pdf](#)
- [2017-02-20-09:18_3-problemsolvingrubric-21clerubric.pdf](#)
- [2017-02-20-09:18_socialandcivicexpectationsrubric2016.pdf](#)

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 Somers High School, a committee of seven 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 also included parents.

The self-study of Somers High School extended over a period of 17 school months from September of 2015 to March 2017. The visiting team was pleased to note that parents had 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, Somers 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 14 members was assigned by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Somers High School. The visiting team members spent four days in Somers, 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, and school administrators, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Somers High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 25 hours shadowing 14 students for a half day
- a total of 25 hours of classroom observation
- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facility
- individual meetings with 28 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 Somers High School.

Standard 1 Indicator 1

Conclusions

Somers High School engaged in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning. The process began in 2014 when the school obtained a State Professional Development Grant (SPDG). First steps included a review of the mission statement created in 2006. A committee composed of faculty and a small cohort of students, parents and community members agreed that this mission statement was still valid. Next, the faculty adopted the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework which has been supported by numerous research studies. The SPDG faculty leadership team and the student "Spartan Crew" collaborated to develop the foundation of the core values and beliefs about learning known as the Spartan Code. All students were invited, and in some cases encouraged, to join the Spartan Crew in order to have a wide range of student voices. Parents and community members were invited to participate in a "welcoming walk-through" in order to share their impressions. The full faculty voted to accept the four pillars of the Spartan Code, "Respect, Responsibility, Integrity, and Kindness" as the basis of the school's core values and beliefs about learning. In the fall of 2015, a kickoff assembly took place to introduce the SHS's core values and beliefs, known as the Spartan Code, to the student body. The assembly was a collaborative effort by teachers and students to demonstrate appropriate and inappropriate behaviors through skits. Each year, the assembly takes place to affirm SHS's commitment to its core values and beliefs and to address any concerns that emerged the previous year. The core values and beliefs are prevalent throughout the school, in hallways, in classrooms, on the school's website and letterhead, and on various documents. Students (85.7 percent) and parents (82.6 percent) are familiar with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. As a result of the dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process guided by current research to identify and commit to a set of core values and beliefs about learning, the entire school community has a sense of ownership and commitment to the school's core values.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teachers
- students
- parents
- Endicott survey

Standard 1 Indicator 2

Conclusions

SHS has challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies, and are defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted levels of achievement. SHS faculty collaborated on the development of five academic expectations and one social and civic expectation, along with analytic rubrics to measure student progress. These expectations and the corresponding rubrics were adopted by the full faculty in December 2015. Students are expected to demonstrate competency in reading, communication, problem solving, technology, and creative expression, along with positive citizenship characterized by respect, responsibility, integrity, and kindness. Each rubric measures students on a four point scale: Exceeds expectations (4), meets expectations (3), approaching expectations (2), below expectations (1). All teachers report student progress on the civic and social expectation, and each department serves as the primary assessor of one of the academic expectations. Parents (71.7 percent) are familiar with the 21st century learning expectations; and students (73.7 percent) are familiar with the school-wide rubrics which teachers use to assess assignments. Also, 60.4 percent of staff feel that the school-wide analytic rubrics define the the 21st century learning expectations. Because Somers High School has developed learning expectations and corresponding analytic rubrics, most students are able to understand their performance level and what is needed to meet school-wide learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Somers High School's Core Values and Beliefs are reflected extensively in the culture of the school. In some areas these core values and 21st century learning expectations drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in classrooms, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations. Students are able to recall the core values and beliefs (Spartan Code) by memory. Eighty-seven percent of students report that they are familiar with the core values and beliefs, and 79 percent of staff feels that the core values and beliefs are actively reflected in the school's culture. Seventy percent of parents report that core values and beliefs are shared at parent conferences. Clubs such as student advisory council, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, GSA, and Interact Club provide students with implicit and explicit opportunities to live the core values. The Spartan Code and the four pillars are visible around the building and within classrooms. Sixty-four percent of staff feels that the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations are used to guide policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations. For example, the office revised its referral process to better reflect the core values and beliefs, creating a system of major and minor referrals that allow for staff members to track how well students are living the core values as well as to track any under-the-radar behavior patterns. Additionally, students receive "Spartan Bucks" when they are caught living the core values, and resources have been set aside to pay for items in the school store that students use "Spartan Bucks" buy.

Although the English department consistently uses the rubrics for 21st century learning, some departments report that they the rubrics in addition to content-specific rubrics. The English department spent two summers revamping curriculum based on the common core as well as 21st century learning expectations. Social Studies has incorporated inquiry-learning through primary and secondary resources. SPDG developed lesson plans related to the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations for use in advisory, and staff now use common language to refer to the Spartan Code. In addition, money was spent on signage, professional development, curriculum writing for advisory, and 21st century learning expectations posters and rubrics.

Because the Somers High School Core Values and Beliefs are reflected extensively in the culture of the school, students are able to live the Spartan Code. When the core values and 21st century learning expectations are consistently used to drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment across all content areas, and to guide the school's policies, beliefs, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations, then students will be able to meet the school's learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 1 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Somers High School inconsistently reviews and revises its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as on district and school community priorities. Using the State Professional Development Grant (SPDG), staff identified the PBIS supports program, a highly researched and data-driven program, to serve as the foundation for their core values and beliefs about learning. Staff has revised the core values and beliefs twice over ten years, although the new core values and beliefs are seen as organic and as a living document. Over the last two summers, SPDG work has focused on creating an action plan for implementing and supporting the core values and learning beliefs across the school year, although the core values and beliefs were not reviewed or revised. Students share their input regarding the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations through the Spartan Crew. The SPDG has driven a district focus on PBIS, which has led to a vertically aligned approach to behavior and ethical values. Technology, one of the 21st century learning expectations, has also been a district priority. There are plans to revisit the core values and beliefs within the next year or two. When Somers High School has a consistent process to review and revise its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, then students will be supported in their achievement of the school's learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 1 Commendations

Commendation

The inclusive process for developing the school's core values and beliefs

Commendation

The high visibility of the core values and beliefs about learning throughout the building

Commendation

The annual kick-off assembly that introduces and highlights the Spartan Code

Commendation

The measurable, observable learning expectations with associated school-wide rubrics that address the needs of the school's 21st century learners

Commendation

The involvement of all student viewpoints and stakeholders in the creation of the Spartan Code

Commendation

The clear reflection of the Spartan Code across the culture of SHS

Commendation

The school-wide familiarity with the school's core values, beliefs and learning expectations

Standard 1 Recommendations

Recommendation

Implement a process that includes all members of the school community to regularly review and revise the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as on district and community priorities

Recommendation

Ensure that the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every content area and classroom, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations

Standard 2 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The Somers High School curriculum is being purposefully designed but is incomplete; therefore, not all students are ensured the opportunity to practice and demonstrate achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Staff (60.4 percent) believe the curriculum is purposefully designed so that all students achieve 21st century learning expectations. The 21st century learning expectations with school-wide rubrics are assigned to each curriculum area, and teachers are required to collect data once per quarter. There is inconsistent understanding of how to measure achievement using these school-wide rubrics. This data is collected and reported, but it is not currently informing curriculum redesign. The curriculum director is working with departments to vertically align curriculum and complete scope and sequence for all courses, which will serve as a foundation for integrating the 21st century learning expectations in the curriculum going forward. Various departments report having worked to create purposefully designed curriculum, but in curricular areas where there are newly introduced curriculum standards and state frameworks [Social Studies, Arts, Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), Math & English (CCS)], the curriculum is in flux. As curriculum work is completed, all curricula will be uploaded to the Atlas Rubicon curriculum mapping software. When the curriculum is purposefully designed, Somers High School will ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The curriculum is not yet written in a common format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, and skills; the school's 21st century learning expectations; instructional strategies; and assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic or course specific rubrics. Staff (43.4 percent) state there is a common formal template for writing curriculum. Development of scope and sequence by course and grade levels throughout the district (target completion June 2017) and vertical articulation pre-K to 12 are priorities identified by the director of curriculum. An online curriculum resource, Rubicon Atlas, will provide the district a platform to convert existing curriculum into a common format and will support student performance monitoring of 21st century learning expectations. A full curriculum template on Rubicon Atlas is targeted for completion by mid-April 2017. A half-day training for teachers on the use of Rubicon Atlas and the full curriculum template is proposed for May 2017. Professional development on curriculum design, instructional strategies, and integration of technology into the curriculum are supported by the directors of curriculum and technology. The district's previous director of curriculum had staff develop curriculum using the backwards design model, and in some areas, curriculum includes essential questions, concepts, content, and skills. However, staff indicate that the new curriculum revision is in some ways moving away from this template.

Teachers often do not consistently measure student achievement of 21st century learning expectations using the school-wide rubrics or use results to inform curriculum development, and existing curriculum does not purposefully engage students in learning that is focused on the school's 21st century learning expectations. Curriculum revision has largely focused on alignment to new state and national standards and only loosely relates to the school's learning expectations.

When the curriculum is written in a consistent format and includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content and skills, instructional strategies, assessment practices and 21st century learning expectations measured by analytic and course-specific rubrics, then there will be greater opportunity for students to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Some existing curriculum promotes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem solving, and higher order thinking in some disciplines and across some levels of academic offerings. There are some authentic learning opportunities in and out of school, some cross-disciplinary learning, and the district's 1:1 technology initiative emphasizes the informed and ethical use of technology in the classroom.

Eighty-two percent of students indicate their courses challenge them to think critically and to solve problems, and 86.8 percent of staff agree the formal curriculum in their subject areas emphasizes inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking. In one class, students took their understanding of recipes and were asked to change them based on the way salt content works. In an architecture class, students are tasked with designing a full work up of plans for a home, based on specific criteria set out for them. Students in World Languages create travel brochures, using their larger knowledge of languages and the world. A faculty survey also indicates 83.3 percent of the teachers feel the curriculum promotes depth of understanding for all students. While there is a perception of inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking by staff, there is limited evidence to support this conclusion. Per the director of curriculum, some professional development has been initiated for staff, which focuses on instructional strategies that promote higher order thinking and providing effective student feedback.

Teachers genuinely show a willingness to collaborate both within and across disciplines, but indicate this collaboration typically occurs on an informal basis, as opposed to PLC time. Students in the art and English departments collaborate through creative expression by writing about an art object. Although 62 percent of students feel that they have opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning, only 36 percent of staff agree.

There are a variety of authentic learning experiences in many disciplines, such as the Electrathon challenge, VEX Robots, Architectural Design, mock trials, lab experiments and inter-disciplinary activities between world languages, food service, and the music program. In addition, students can participate in several internship opportunities and career exploration in the community to extend learning beyond the classroom. Overall, 65 percent of students and 76 percent of staff indicate that there are significant opportunities for authentic application of learning both within and outside of school.

According to a faculty survey, 75 percent of faculty feel students are informed about the ethical use of technology and per the Endicott survey, 85.7 percent of students believe they are knowledgeable about the effective use of technology. Students and parents must sign a Technology Use Agreement contract. Teachers in all disciplines are routinely integrating technology into the curriculum. In one class, students were using computers to create advertisements for a product. In another class, students were engaged in online learning in Google Classroom. In another classroom, students used an app "Plickers" to assess students on a formative basis. The curriculum and technology directors encourage teacher-led professional development to integrate technology into the curriculum. Students, staff and parents indicate the media center staff trains students on MLA citation and provides access to numerous databases that support student learning. Google classroom and ebackpack are used extensively in all curricular areas.

Because Somers High School offers a variety of authentic learning experiences and emphasizes an informed and ethical use of technology, students are able to apply their learning in meaningful and modern ways. With an increased emphasis on the depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem solving, higher order thinking skills, and cross-disciplinary learning, students will be better able to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 4

Conclusions

There is some alignment between the written and taught curriculum at Somers High School. Sixty-six percent of staff feel the written and taught curriculum are aligned. Written curriculum is at various levels of completion within departments by course and across disciplines. Most departments state that common midterm and final exams are given by course and that the principal reviews these assessments. The principal stated that he reviews the assessments to ensure they include a variety of assessment methods, provide sufficient rigor, and are appropriate for the course and level. Some departments stated that content in their courses mostly aligned for teachers of common preps, but unit assessments and coursework may vary. Inconsistencies between formal written curriculum and actual taught curriculum were noted in disciplines with staff turnover. Alignment of written and taught curriculum is monitored by administrators through the formal observation process as part of the school's teacher evaluation plan. Through this process, teachers refer to curriculum to identify standards addressed in the observed lesson and instructional strategies which will be used in the lesson to meet those standards. Classroom observations by the director of curriculum identified needs in the areas of curriculum development and the use of effective instructional strategies and in providing student feedback. When there is consistent, clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum, there will be more learning opportunities for student achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 5

Conclusions

There is incomplete curricular coordination and vertical articulation for all disciplines and insufficient curricular coordination amongst the academic disciplines at Somers High School and with the sending schools in the district. In a staff curriculum survey, 58.3 percent of faculty agree there is vertical alignment within their department, as well as with sending schools in the district. Scope and sequence documents are being developed for all curricular areas with a target completion date of June 2017. The district plans to use this as a baseline to facilitate future vertical articulation discussions. Teachers report that there is not a focus on articulation between subject areas. Subject areas have met to discuss responsibilities in regards to the school's school wide rubrics, but conversation has not occurred to explicitly ensure interdisciplinary connections among the academic disciplines. The district has recently adopted Rubicon Atlas for curriculum at all levels and common templates for each course are in development. The director of curriculum meets with middle school and high school staff by department twice per year. For high school level courses taught at the middle school, administration stated that common midterm and final exams are administered. When there is effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation amongst departments and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district, then students will have the opportunity to meet the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school board
- 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 sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.

Staff (79.2 percent) of the staff feels the school provides sufficient instructional materials in order to implement the curriculum. Also, 90.9 percent of the students feel the school provides them with sufficient instructional materials, technology, equipment, and supplies for their courses, and 89.9 percent of parents feel their students have adequate instructional materials for their courses. Somers has a one-to-one initiative through which each student is issued a Chromebook for use at home and school. The classrooms each have projectors and academic classrooms include sound systems to further implement the curriculum. Technology education rooms have specialized equipment that allows for student construction using many different materials. The business department has modern computers for implementing its curriculum. The food services classroom has an industrial kitchen in order to enhance its curriculum. Art teachers have appropriate spaces for supporting the curriculum. Science teachers each have their own classroom, but not all science rooms are modern updated lab spaces, and some safety equipment in the labs was not operational. Most teachers in the building have their own classroom, but the intervention teachers and some of the health classes are in different classrooms. The chorus does not have its own space and meets in the auditorium for classes except when the auditorium is scheduled for other purposes. The library/media center has a computer room in addition to two laptop carts that are available for sign out. Parents (73.5 percent) feel the library and media resources adequately support learning in their children's classes. The library provides access to digital databases and reference materials. Staffing levels are sufficient to implement the curriculum. The average class size in the school is 15.5 students. Science and social studies have class sizes that average over 17 students. However, in some curricular areas, there is a demand for more seats than are available. Because Somers High School provides sufficient staffing, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and library/media center resources, students have the resources necessary to meet the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 7

Conclusions

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

Seventy percent of staff believe that the district provides sufficient personnel to engage students in high-level instruction. Students are able to take courses they are interested in. Additionally, students feel that their class sizes are small and that if they are in need of additional help or support, they are always able to find an available teacher to meet their needs. Parents report feeling that the school is well staffed, and the district leadership and board of education echoed this feeling.

Thirty-four percent of the staff indicates that they have sufficient time to be engaged in formal curriculum evaluation, review and revision work. Each department has common PLC time one period during each six-day cycle to work on professional needs. PLC time is directed by the team leader and allocated to different initiatives such as data analysis, scope and sequence of courses, and predominantly the NEASC self-study in the past year. The district has seven total professional development days built into the contract. These seven days were primarily used for the NEASC self-study over the past two years. The curriculum director meets with each department twice per year and the district data team provides PSAT and SAT data to some high school departments. There is not a formal data team at the high school to support analysis of student achievement results, however there are plans to train the high school teachers in data analysis in the 2017-2018 school year.

The district has a five-year plan to fund curriculum development. In addition there are some funds available for curriculum development both through the district and through the Somers Education Foundation. Some teachers do not understand how to apply or to use this funding, while others report that funding is readily available and easy to access. In addition, only 55 percent of parents feel that co-curricular activities are well funded.

Because the district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, the staff is able to consistently meet the needs of the student body. When the district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient time and financial support, the curriculum will better reflect the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Commendations

Commendation

The focus on curriculum design that provides a clear scope and sequence

Commendation

The use of a common, digital curriculum platform

Commendation

The willingness of staff to informally collaborate on curriculum, especially across disciplines

Commendation

The variety of course offerings and authentic learning opportunities available to students

Commendation

The focused use of technology within the curriculum to support student learning

Commendation

The initial development of a scope and sequence across all curricular areas

Commendation

The continuing focus on development of vertical articulation across curricular areas

Commendation

The dedication to class sizes that support effective teaching and learning

Commendation

The formal PLC time built into the school schedule

Standard 2 Recommendations

Recommendation

Purposefully design curriculum across all grade-levels and content areas to ensure that the school's 21st century learning expectations are included and that all students have opportunities to practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations

Recommendation

Implement a common curricular format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills; the school's 21st century learning expectations; instructional strategies; and assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic or course specific rubrics

Recommendation

Incorporate data collection and analysis to inform instruction and update curriculum

Recommendation

Ensure the curriculum across all content areas emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem solving; higher order thinking; and cross-disciplinary learning

Recommendation

Develop and implement a formal process to ensure the written and taught curriculum are aligned

Recommendation

Implement a systematic and ongoing process for curricular coordination and vertical articulation within departments, across disciplines, and with sending schools

Recommendation

Provide the staff with dedicated time to use assessment results and current research for continued development, evaluation and revision of the curriculum

Recommendation

Provide the staff with dedicated financial resources to use assessment results and current research for continued development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum

Standard 3 Indicator 1

Conclusions

Teacher's instructional practices are informally examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. Most teachers are clearly familiar with the school's identified beliefs about learning and are able to reference an expectation about learning when discussing an instructional strategy that has been employed. The school's values and beliefs are clearly visible throughout the building, in each classroom, and in other areas of the building, such as the cafeteria, and hallways. Teaching practices support the school's core beliefs about learning in some areas. In English classes, teachers regularly use the communication rubric as a guide for their instruction, and have adjusted their curriculum to reflect this as a priority. Teachers in the art department constantly engage students in focusing on their creative expression. Additionally, support for the core value reflecting effective use of technology was widespread across all content areas. Teachers (56.6 percent) report that they are engaged in reflective practices and examination of instruction to ensure consistency with the school's learning expectations. Fifty-seven percent of teachers believe they incorporate the school's core values and beliefs in their daily instruction. School-wide rubrics are used to assess the attainment of the 21st century learning expectations for reading, communication, problem solving, technology, creative expression and civic and social expectations. While most teachers report that these rubrics are only used one time per quarter, some teachers use them more often. This was also reiterated by students who experienced a wide range of use throughout their classes. Some students were very familiar with the rubrics while others had not recalled their use. Professional learning communities often focus on teaching strategies that will improve PSAT scores but do not necessarily focus on the 21st century learning expectations to promote student achievement and the school's core beliefs about learning. When teachers' instructional practices are formally examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, then students will be able to master the school's 21st century learning skills.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 3 Indicator 2

Conclusions

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

Students feel that their learning is often focused on the whole class as only 34.2 percent of students feel that their teachers personalized their learning. Observations primarily showed whole-class instruction, with some instances of personalization. The Pride Program offers personalized project-based instruction to students with executive functioning, social-emotional and academic goals using Google Classroom. Teachers often use preparation time to learn about and to identify new ways to personalize learning for their students.

In some areas, students are engaged in cross-disciplinary education and learning, although these opportunities exist within individual classes and are not a result of purposeful cross-content curricular planning. Examples include projects such the creation, marketing and production of products to sell to the community. Students also have the opportunity to utilize their world-language skills within a choir setting. In a Forensics elective, students are able to apply trigonometry skills to their learning in order to solve a blood stain analysis. Additionally, students are able to create art pieces in order to raise funds for world hunger. Overall, 66.7 percent of staff feel that they have made purposeful, cross-disciplinary connections within their classroom.

Students have some opportunities across content areas to self-direct their learning using technology games such as Quizlet, Kahoot and student-led research projects. Students are also able to be self-directed through job shadowing and internship evaluations. However, while 88.9 percent of staff feel that they offer consistent opportunities for students to be self-directed, only 64 percent of students feel that their teachers provide them the opportunity to have choice in their learning.

Although 76.8 percent of parents and 84.9 percent of teachers believe their students have many opportunities for inquiry, problem solving and higher order thinking, these opportunities are sporadic and often occur in higher level classes. Students report that they are able to use problem solving and focus on inquiry learning mostly in their higher level classes in math and science. In other classes, students have the opportunity to examine primary source documents in order to draw inferences and develop conclusions about important events. However, some students feel that some peers choose to take lower level classes due to the perception that their is less work and that it is easier to achieve higher grades. Parents echoed this sentiment, observing that most of the higher order thinking and challenging learning occurs in the higher level classes.

In some instances, students are able to apply their learning to authentic tasks. Spanish students compose a children's book in Spanish for the elementary students and then visit the school and read the book to the students. Art students put on an art show of their work at the public library and town guests are invited to attend. Additionally, the student store is managed by students and creates revenue for the school which in turn is used for teacher mini-grants. Authentic learning and application takes place in the food services class/labs as students create and prepare food recipes and learn about safety in the food and beverage industry. Students enrolled in the foods services program work at the Horizons Cafe run by the food services department. Parents and students report that authentic learning is often more frequently occurring in higher level courses than in lower level or introductory courses.

Students (59.4 percent) feel that teachers provided them opportunities to self assess their work, and only 66.7 percent of teachers feel that they offered students consistent, self-assessment opportunities. Self-assessment

often occurs at the end of units, and is not used in a formative way for students to make adjustments or for growth. Additionally, self-assessment was not observable across all content areas.

Technology is extensively integrated in instruction as every student has a Chromebook housing many applications used for instruction and communication. Technology is also integrated into the learning experience through programs such as Naviance, PowerSchool, Google Classroom, and Prezi. In addition, 83.9 percent of students feel that their teachers utilize technology on a consistent basis within the classroom.

Because Somers High School extensively integrates technology into teaching, student achievement is supported. When teachers' instructional practices consistently engage students in purposefully planned cross-disciplinary learning, offers consistent opportunities for higher order thinking across all class levels, and engage students in self-assessment and reflection, authentic opportunities, and personalized and self-directed learning, then Somers High School students will be better able to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- facility tour
- student work
- teacher interview
- parents
- Endicott survey

Standard 3 Indicator 3

Conclusions

In some areas teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by utilizing formative assessments, differentiating, purposefully organizing group learning activities and providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom.

Teachers in the math department use formative assessments through vehicles such as Kahoot and Google Classroom, “do now” activities and pre- and post-assessments at the beginning of a unit. Teachers in art, science, English, business and technology education provide students with multiple opportunities for direct feedback on assessments prior to the completion of projects, labs and summative assessment. This feedback is provided to students during instructional time through individual conferencing, discussion, individual then group problem solving, Google Classroom and input on specific steps to reach a final project, lab or summative assessment. These assessments at times result in an adjustment of instructional practices such as re-teaching material, providing students with opportunities to share their results and to get and give feedback or increasing the amount of time spent on a concept. Teachers (62.1 percent) report adjusting their instructional practices based on student progress in achieving the 21st century learning expectations. While formative assessments are being used consistently by most teachers, some teachers are using formative assessments on a more sporadic and limited basis.

Strategic differentiation occurs when students in business, technology, world languages, science, English, art and social studies classes are given choice as to the topics they research and the manner in which they choose to present their projects. In addition, teachers in various departments modify work for students based on ability and need. Most differentiation, however, reflects student ability rather than ways in which students learn. In one classroom, a teacher gives out partially filled in notes to specific students. In another classroom, a teacher modifies the level of difficulty of questions when students take an assessment. In a third classroom, a teacher provides notes ahead of time to a student so that they may listen to the lecture instead of note taking.

Students (82 percent) and teachers (81 percent) report that students are organized into purposefully organized learning groups. Freshmen and sophomores report having some opportunity to choose their own groups while juniors and seniors report that most of their groups are of their own choosing. Teacher organized groups are developed by learning needs, learning styles and personalities. In one math class, the teacher groups students to ensure that every group has at least one student who has mastered the content and can support their peers. In a PE class, student place themselves into groups based upon their level of ability.

Teachers are consistently available to meet with students both during the school day and after school hours to provide additional instruction. Parents (84.4 percent) report that teachers provide additional support to their student when needed. Paraprofessionals are utilized strategically across the building in order to provide support for learning. Additionally, notes are made available to students through Google Slides and presentations are often posted on YouTube, in order to provide students with access once the class is over. In some cases, students are able to utilize fill-in-the-blanks notes as a strategy during lecture.

When all teachers adjust their practices by consistently using formative assessments, strategically differentiating, purposefully organizing group learning activities and providing additional support and alternative strategies, the needs of each student will be met.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 3 Indicator 4

Conclusions

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

Teachers (79.2 percent) say they improve their instructional practices by analyzing formative and summative assessments and analyzing scores from SATs and NWEA scores for math and ELA. Many teachers use pre- and post-assessments, midterms and final exams. In the math department, quizzes are given for sections of a unit (formative) and tests (summative) are given for unit assessments. Kahoot and IXL are used in the math department for formative assessments. The English department assesses students at the end of a unit in the form of a formal essay. Pre-reading guides, anticipation guides and essay workshops (formative assessments) are integrated throughout the unit prior to the summative assessment.

Teachers (64.2 percent) agree that they have formal opportunities to examine student work to improve their instructional practices. Although teachers have formally scheduled PLC time built into the schedule once every six days, this time is often dedicated to focuses other than instruction or student work. These meetings have focused on data analysis, as well as some curriculum writing. Additionally, much of the time has been spent on the accreditation process. In addition, there is a discrepancy among departments in terms of how much time is allotted for PLC meetings to occur, with some departments having 60 minutes and others having less. Specifically, in the arts, music, business, food service, and tech classes, meetings are the length of a class period, which represents an almost 20 minute difference.

Students (37.3 percent) feel that teachers ask for ideas/opinions on how to improve their teaching. The social studies department and world languages department note that they at times use student feedback regarding the guidelines and expectations for projects. Parents (26.1 percent) feel that teachers have asked them for feedback about their practice. The primary method teachers use feedback to adjust their instruction is through the evaluation process.

Sporadically teachers improve their instruction by reviewing current research, individually and collaboratively. Teachers subscribe to professional publications, keep a professional memberships, and read professional blogs such as Edutopia and Edweek. Some departments have attended professional development to further improve their instruction. Some teachers report being able to attend PD to further improve their instruction, while others report not having or taking these opportunities. Health and PE teachers were able to attend Google Boot Camp. Members of the art department were able to attend a weeklong PD at the Maine College of Art. Some staff report that these opportunities are available for all but that teachers need to be proactive.

Teachers (69.8 percent) agree that they engage in formal opportunities for professional discourse focused on instructional strategies. For example, teachers were trained on the Google Apps for Education and learned how the applications can improve instruction and communication between students and parents. A desire exists for PLC time to be more singularly focused on instructional practices.

Because Somers High School teachers frequently improve their instructional practices by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments, they are better able to adjust their instruction in order to maximize student learning. When all teachers, individually and collaboratively, consistently use feedback from students, teachers, parents and supervisors, examine research and engage in professional discourse focused on instructional practice, students will be better able to achieve the school's 21st century

learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- parents
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey

Standard 3 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Most teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and content-specific instructional practices. Eighty-three percent of teachers report that they are knowledgeable about the subject they teach and 94.3 percent reports that they maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices. Individual and group professional development opportunities are provided to teachers. Requests for specific and relevant professional development opportunities are consistently granted. The paraprofessionals requested and were granted teacher-led professional development on Chromebooks in order to meet the needs and support the students they work with. Members of the world languages department attend the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers Conference. Members of the social studies and English departments attended a Google forum. Bi-weekly after-school professional sessions are led by teachers willing to present to colleagues. Teachers are paid to run professional development, and much of this has been focused on technology. Individual teachers apply for grants and take time in the summer to seek professional development in their content area. Teachers who teach the courses designated as Early College Experience attend one-time week long professional learning in the content area during the summer at the University of Connecticut. Special education teachers are provided with professional development on current federal and state laws regarding special education. While the central office maintains a professional library, only teachers in the English department have a professional library relating to instruction in the content area. There are no records of how frequently this library is utilized. Professional learning communities are provided with an agenda created by the principal and passed down through the team leaders. Topics discussed include such items as scheduling for the next year and strategies to improve student performance on the PSATs. Professional learning communities typically do not engage in research and instructional practices focused on the 21st century learning expectation within their content areas. Because teachers are adult learners, reflective practitioners, and maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices, students are able to learn from the quality instruction that is offered.

Sources of Evidence

- teacher interview
- teachers
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Commendations

Commendation

The purposeful use of technology for instructional purposes

Commendation

The staff availability to provide instruction outside of class time

Commendation

The use of summative and formative data to improve instructional practices

Commendation

The prevalence of teacher-run professional development opportunities

Commendation

The use of grants to meet professional development needs across content areas

Standard 3 Recommendations

Recommendation

Formally examine alignment to and consistency between teacher instructional practices and the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations

Recommendation

Provide increased opportunities for students to be engaged as active and self-directed learners

Recommendation

Define personalized learning and increase opportunities for students learning to be personalized

Recommendation

Provide authentic learning opportunities for all students at all grade and course levels

Recommendation

Increase opportunities for students to engage in self-reflection and self-assessment

Recommendation

Utilize differentiated instructional practices to reflect the needs of all learners

Recommendation

Develop and implement a process for teachers to engage in consistent and formal professional discourse focused on current research and instructional practices

Recommendation

Develop and implement a process to use feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents, in order to improve instructional practices

Standard 4 Indicator 1

Conclusions

Somers High School inconsistently 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 identified in their school-wide analytic rubrics. Forty-nine percent of the staff is in agreement that they understand the formal process used to assess individual progress in achieving learning expectations. Since completing this survey, the school has developed a formal process to assess progress on 21st century learning expectations. Most teachers examine alignment of student work to 21st century rubric criteria on an individual basis, however, collaboration within and among departments is limited. The school is in the process of creating school and district data teams to assess whole-school progress. Each department is responsible for using one of the rubrics for 21st century learning expectations, although most departments use course-specific rubrics in addition to the rubrics for 21st century learning expectations. All teachers use a school-wide rubric at least once per quarter. World language teachers use the rubric for "communication" for every project that requires writing. English teachers also use it for every assignment and this is systematized in Google Classroom. In art and health the "creativity" rubric is used for some projects. In social studies the "reading" rubric is used two to three times per quarter. In technology it is used one to two times per quarter. In science, elements of the "problem-solving" rubric are incorporated into a lab rubric that is used regularly; the full rubric is used once per quarter to prepare for report cards. However, in most instances, the use of the school-wide rubrics is seen as an additional measurement, and is rarely used to guide instruction or to provide meaningful feedback for student growth. In fact, while students report using rubrics in their courses, many of these rubrics applied to course-specific learning goals rather than the school's 21st century learning goals. Although individual student progress is documented in the quarterly grades on report cards, parents and students report that they are unsure of how this progress is meaningful. When professional staff employs a formal process to continuously assess 21st century learning expectations using school-wide analytic rubrics, whole-school and individual student progress toward achieving the school's 21st century learning can be measured.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 4 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school's professional staff communicates, on an emerging basis, individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families and the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community. Each academic department is responsible for evaluating students on one of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Families are provided with a copy of these rubrics at the school's Open House, and they are also available on the school's website. Individual student progress is communicated to families at the end of each quarter when it is recorded in PowerSchool and printed on report cards as a number 1 to 4, with 4 exceeding expectations. Sixty-two percent of parents agree that the school provides formal reports to explain progress in achieving the school-wide 21st century learning expectations. Some teachers also write specific comments referencing 21st century expectations on the report card.

The school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations have been communicated to the school community on one occasion. The principal indicated that school-wide progress was reported in a 2015-2016 Whole School Report on 21st Century Learning, which was distributed to various stakeholders via the principal's newsletter and meetings with staff. Although progress on 21st century learning is not regularly reported to the board of education, they report having a strong understanding of the strengths and needs of the overall school population.

When the school regularly communicates individual students' progress and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students, families, and the community, stakeholders will become more informed about progress and expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- community members
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- school website

Standard 4 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. The English, math, and social studies departments use PSAT, SAT, and AP data to monitor student progress, target areas of weakness, and adjust instructional strategies. The science department uses pre-CAPT and CAPT scores to identify and target areas of weakness among students. The math department uses PowerSchool to track assessment data by course. The math and art departments use frequent formative assessments to identify inequities and identify students who need more attention. The world languages department teachers discuss student progress on writing and reading benchmark assessments in order to identify student learning objectives. The self-paced nature of Computer Applications courses creates an environment in which some students get ahead and others fall behind, allowing for instruction on a one-to-one basis. Students who are struggling in a particular discipline are discussed in PLCs and invited to meet with the teacher for extra help or are referred to intervention services. Students entering 9th grade are referred to intervention services and the Pride program by the middle school. All students in 9th and 10th grade take the NWEA three times per year. This data is reviewed by the guidance department and administration, and students who are not performing as expected are referred to tutoring/intervention services. Data on behavioral referrals is regularly reviewed by the SRBI committee and students with behavioral or social needs are referred to the Pride program. Because Somers High School collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement, they are able to ensure that all students can meet the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- department leaders
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Prior to each unit of study, teachers inconsistently communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and consistently communicate related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed. Math students are given iXL strands that outline all topics that will be covered in the unit, and teachers discuss with the students the problem-solving rubric prior to relevant assignments and projects. In world languages and English, students are provided with a content-specific rubric and 21st century learning expectations with every performance assessment. The technology and engineering department provide students with rubrics for each unit and corresponding assessments. These rubrics have 21st century learning expectations built into them. In science, the problem-solving rubric for 21st century learning is discussed at the beginning of each quarter, and students are given a common rubric for all lab reports for the course. In social studies and math, 21st century learning expectation strands are incorporated into their content-specific rubrics. In health classes, students are provided with exemplars of student work prior to beginning group projects. In art, students spend several class periods at the start of a course learning to understand what the civic and social expectations look like in the art room. Students report that criteria almost always emphasizes course-specific criteria and not the 21st century learning expectations. Parents are familiar with the 21st century learning expectations, but feel that their students are often assessed solely on course-specific criteria. Because teachers consistently communicate related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed, students understand what they need to learn in order to be successful. When teachers consistently communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations prior to each unit of study, then students will understand how the unit supports their progress and growth toward meeting the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 4 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Prior to summative assessments, most teachers provide students with criteria for success, such as corresponding rubrics, which define targeted levels of achievement. Eighty percent of faculty say that they provide rubrics before summative assessments; 73.5 percent of students understand in advance what work they have to accomplish to meet teacher expectations. Parents see students bringing home study guides and project rubrics. Math students receive rubrics before projects and study guides for quizzes and tests. In health classes, students are provided with a detailed checklist of the criteria for success when assigned a project, which the teacher uses to evaluate the student upon completion of the project. In art classes, students are given a rubric for summative projects, and the teacher frequently checks in with students to conference on progress toward meeting the goals; students are also given a rubric for the 21st century learning expectations for creativity for most projects. Students in Spanish classes were given criteria for success that outlined the criteria for success in a formative assessment on Spanish artists, as well as a copy of the 21st century expectations for communication. In science classes, student performance is assessed through a department-wide laboratory rubric aligned to the language of the school-wide rubric of problem solving, and students receive rubrics before research, projects, and presentation assignments. In science, health, and English classes, teachers utilize anchor sets and exemplars to model projects to students to define acceptable levels of performance and to have the discussion to the alignment of the 21st century skills. Because teachers provide students with criteria for success which define targeted levels of achievement, students are able to understand how they can achieve success in their learning.

Sources of Evidence

- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- students
- parents
- Endicott survey

Standard 4 Indicator 6

Conclusions

In each unit of study, most teachers employ a range of formative and summative assessments. Ninety-eight percent of Somers High School staff use formative assessments on a daily basis and summative assessments on a weekly basis. In a science course, students completed laboratory activities on solving chemical equations to prepare for a lab project. In academic classes, formative assessments include Kahoot, Google Forms, homework, and exit tickets. In math, students use Plickers and Noodle Tools to gather formative assessment data, as well as color-differentiated math skill drills and Socrative. In Spanish students engage in conversational activities, while the teacher monitors and notes misconceptions or errors in student responses that are utilized as an opportunity for one-on-one conferencing with students to suggest corrective feedback. Students in math, world languages, and science take formal quizzes and exams. In social studies and English classes students write term papers. These summative assessments are modified through collaboration with special education teachers for students with IEPs, however choice and personalization for regular education students is limited. Music classes allow students to conduct concert reflections. AP social studies courses utilize Document-Based Questioning (DBQ) to analyze primary source documents. In science, students apply techniques learned in class to analyze and identify fibers from crime scenes. In art, students demonstrated their learning of art themes by choosing the subject of their paintings or sculptures. Students in social studies complete a World War II portfolio, in which they have choice in the tasks that they complete. Spanish students can chose between taking a final written exam or making a movie. Because teachers use a range of formative and summative assessment strategies on a regular basis to provide targeted feedback to improve student learning, all students have the opportunity to demonstrate progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 4 Indicator 7

Conclusions

Somers High School teachers occasionally collaborate in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, and rarely collaborate on the creation, analysis, and revision of common assessments. The school provides designated formal time for teachers and departmental team leaders to collaborate in professional learning communities (PLCs) every six days. There currently is no formal structure to collaborate on the development of assessments. Sixty-eight percent of Somers High School staff agree that an inequity exists in the amount of time for teachers to collaborate formally on the design, implementation, and revision of formative and summative assessments. Core content areas receive approximately 60 minutes of collaborative time every six days, whereas areas such as physical education and unified arts receive approximately 40 minutes. Some individual teachers report that student work is used to revise instructional practices either on an individual basis or between and among colleagues. The PLC process allows for meetings and discussion at the whole department level, yet, most of the conversations regarding development of common formative and summative assessments specific to a course or grade-level team occur informally. PLC agendas are mostly derived from administrative initiatives with some opportunities for teachers and teacher leaders to set the agenda for discussion. PLC minutes in mathematics, English, social studies, and science focus on the examination of data from common midterm exams and standardized tests. English language arts teachers meet informally to discuss student performance on common assessments and have designed class collaboration opportunities based on the common novels studied in class. Social studies teachers utilize assessment data to develop common formative assessments in their classrooms. Teachers in the English and social studies departments utilize data from the PSAT and SAT to modify instructional strategies around SAT skills such as command of evidence and analysis. With regular, formal opportunities for collaboration that focuses on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments, Somers High School will ensure that assessment feedback helps students to meet the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- Endicott survey

Standard 4 Indicator 8

Conclusions

Some teachers provide specific and timely feedback, however corrective feedback does not always allow students the opportunity to revise and improve their work. Teachers utilize formative assessment strategies to monitor and assess learning in the classroom. Science teachers provide substantial feedback on the department laboratory rubric when reporting on student work, however, students are not afforded the ability to make corrections and resubmit the assignment. In some subject areas students are able to frequently revise and improve their work. In the arts courses, when completing projects, students use rubrics to self-reflect on the progress of their work and then conference with the teacher on how it can be improved; teacher also organizes peer critiques to provide corrective feedback. In Spanish courses, students receive formative assessment feedback on scripts written in class, but the feedback can only be applied to future assignments and does not influence assessment on the current one. Teachers do provide timely feedback to allow their students to improve performance prior to completing summative assessments. In most classes, teachers circulate the room to provide students with feedback while completing formative assessments that build skills for summative assessments. In science classes students practice solving equations prior to completing a lab. In Spanish, students turn in scripts of oral presentations before it is due, and get corrective feedback from the teacher that is incorporated into the final product. In English classes students are required to conference with the teacher for feedback prior to turning a writing assignment in. Teachers in English classes also collaborate to have students in different classes give peer feedback on papers. In English classes, students complete a series of Google Classroom assignments in preparation for a research paper, and the teacher provides corrective feedback to help improve their work prior to beginning the formal research paper process. When all teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback and ensure that students revise and optimize their work, then all students will better meet the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 4 Indicator 9

Conclusions

Teachers frequently use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning. Teachers employ a variety of “dipstick” formative assessment strategies in their classrooms on a daily basis including exit tickets, student questioning, warm-up packets, and quick checks to provide a snapshot of student progress at the conclusion of a lesson. Teachers in the English department utilize formative assessment writing prompts on novels to determine areas of deficiency for student skills such as formatting citations. Teachers utilize this data to provide reinforcement and reteaching opportunities during ensuing lessons and units. Teachers in the science department utilize pre-lab assessments to check in on student progress with problem solving and experimental design and utilize data to organize students into groupings. Mathematics teachers conduct “color activities” and “problem scavenger hunts” to be able to adjust instruction immediately and to provide whole class reinforcement for areas of targeted weakness. The mathematics department conducts benchmark assessments based on warm-ups in class. Because Somers High School teachers frequently use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction, students are able to consistently improve in their learning.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- school leadership

Standard 4 Indicator 10

Conclusions

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

Some individual teachers reported that student work is utilized to modify and adapt instructional practices with colleagues on an informal basis. Work has been performed at the district level to support increased opportunities to examine student work. Opportunities exist across some content areas to meet before, during, and after school in order to make modifications to the curriculum and vary instructional strategies. The English department works in grade-level teams to calibrate grading on student work samples, plan collaboration on assignments from students in different sections of the course, and discuss gaps in the taught curriculum.

Curriculum council work with the director of curriculum has allowed for the creation and alignment of scope and sequence documents, revision of the district assessment calendar to provide access to meaningful student assessment results to drive instruction, and implementation of a cycle for data analysis. In addition, every course has created a common course and grade-level midterm and final exam that the principal checks for rigor. Beyond midterms and final exams, there are no consistent uses of common assessments.

Teachers examine student progress on the school's 21st century learning expectations once per quarter. This information is communicated through report cards. In addition, the principal has examined school-wide progress on learning expectation achievement and reported it in a single edition of the principal's newsletter. Additionally, school PLC minutes reveal that focused conversations in the science and English departments are occurring around student performance with regards to content and skills and suggested instructional strategies aligned to them. In the world languages department, gaps in knowledge for upper level classes were identified, and as a result curriculum and instruction in lower level classes was modified. There are few opportunities for teachers to examine the results for the use of school-wide rubrics in achieving the school's learning expectations in a collaborative manner, however several teachers reported examining the results for their individual classes. Teachers in the English and science departments utilize the school-wide rubrics to examine communication and problem-solving skills in their respective courses.

Data teams occur currently at the district level where performance is discussed around pertinent standardized assessments (NWEA, PSAT, SAT, CAPT Science), yet no current data team structure is in place at the high school. The school principal communicates standardized testing data to the departmental team leaders which is then communicated to their respective departmental staffs. Teachers do have limited opportunities to collaboratively examine standardized assessments in order to revise curriculum and instructional practices.

Regular communication occurs with sending schools to collaborate in SRBI meetings to examine student performance data on incoming eighth grade students. Similar midterm and final examination formats are used at the middle school to help begin conversations about alignment of grading practices between schools. School-wide revisions to grading practices have only occurred sporadically within and among departments. While there is some opportunity for teachers to examine data from sending schools, data is not utilized from receiving schools, including post-secondary institutions, to revise curriculum. To an extent, the school collects and analyzes survey data from current students and alumni. Although seniors participate in exit surveys prior to graduation in the Naviance program, it is no longer current practice to interview alumni.

When teachers and administrators, regularly, on an individual and collaborative basis, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, then Somers High School will be able to ensure that all students are meeting the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- community members
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 11

Conclusions

Grading and reporting practices are not regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. The professional staff does not meet regularly with a focus on revision and review of grading practices, and alignment of the learning expectations by different departments. In 2015, the school staff revised the learning expectations to align with its new core values and beliefs. Students and faculty report that there are inconsistencies in the use of the analytic rubrics and the reporting of student progress toward meeting the criteria of the rubrics. Teachers within a content area have regular conversations about expectations on the weight of assessment types, yet, this does not become a conversation among departments. School counseling staff indicate that a Blue Ribbon Panel on grading practices provided some opportunities for conversation, however, only some departments are engaging in discussions around common grading practices and expectations. Parents report that grading practices are not consistent within all courses at SHS. Each term, teachers report individual student progress in each course on the civic and social learning expectation and on one academic expectation. Parents are able to review this information on student report cards and via the parent portal of PowerSchool. Additionally, teachers sharing a common 21st century rubric enter assessment results into PowerSchool, which provides an average of the scores for communication to parents and student via the report card. When grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning, students will be better able to achieve 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Commendations

Commendation

The collaborative development of school-wide rubrics

Commendation

The use of PowerSchool to report 21st century learning expectations

Commendation

The principal's report on school-wide progress toward 21st century learning

Commendation

The variety of screenings for referral to intervention

Commendation

The consistent practice of providing criteria for success, which enables students to identify high levels of achievement

Commendation

The variety of formative and summative assessments

Commendation

The use of technology to facilitate formative and summative assessments

Commendation

The use of technology to provide corrective feedback

Commendation

The initial work to examine assessment data in order to revise curriculum

Standard 4 Recommendations

Recommendation

Increase the formal use of school-wide rubrics to ensure accurate assessment of individual student achievement of the learning expectations

Recommendation

Develop and implement a process to aggregate individual student data from assessments of the school's 21st century learning expectations to determine whole school progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations and communicate that progress to the school community

Recommendation

Ensure students understand the connection between their learning and the school-wide rubrics

Recommendation

Communicate 21st century learning expectations prior to each unit of study

Recommendation

Increase formal opportunities for teachers to collaborate on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments

Recommendation

Provide consistent and deliberate opportunities for students to revise work in all content areas to improve student learning

Recommendation

Create a formal and consistent process for data collection analysis and disaggregation, including standardized testing, assessments, and feedback from from sending and receiving schools, post-secondary institutions, and alumni, in order to address inequities in student achievement, revise curriculum, and inform instructional practice

Recommendation

Develop a systematic process for staff to regularly review grading practices to ensure alignment with the school's

core values and beliefs about learning

Standard 5 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that results in shared ownership and pride, and inconsistently fosters student responsibility for learning and high expectations for all. Ninety-six percent of staff and 84 percent of parents and students feel that Somers High School promotes a positive, safe, and supportive school culture. Students reference the SRO, visitor badges, and buzzer systems as elements of why they perceive the school to be safe. Students and staff report that the implementation of the Spartan Code has increased the quality of the school climate and level of respectful behavior. Parents report that their students are treated as individuals; students agree. The existence of the unity club, the students supporting students (SSS) group, and other similar groups help support student transitions to the high school as well as promote a feeling of acceptance within the building. Students are celebrated as members of the school community through student recognition opportunities such as student of the month, displays of student artwork and instrumentalist of the year. Morning announcements as well as the school's television monitors announce students' many successes. There are instances where students can take responsibility and ownership of their learning through the job shadowing program, art independent study, culinary program, self-paced technology, as well as choice in how to demonstrate learning in certain classes, however this was not consistent across all curricular areas. While teachers and students both report solid connections, those appear to be supportive socially and emotionally rather than based on student learning. Because the school community systematically builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture, there is shared ownership and pride in the school. When Somers High School consistently fosters student responsibility for learning there will be high expectations for all.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- community members
- department leaders
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school is largely equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to most academic experiences for 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. Eighty-eight percent of teachers feel that SHS requires students to participate in heterogeneously grouped courses. Seventy-three percent of students feel that they are provided opportunities to enroll in classes with a variety of students. Grade 9 and 10 history classes, 9th grade Integrated Science and grades 9/10 health classes are all heterogeneous. Students and/or parents are allowed to opt into honors classes, even without teacher recommendation. They are not, according to parents, able to "override" into AP/ECE, and honors world language classes. In interviews, parents indicated that they feel the school reflects the diversity of the community and that the differences among students are celebrated. Parents report that the school's GPA system does not weigh courses based on academic level (i.e., honors, AP) and therefore discourages students from taking on additional challenges. Because of the inclusive and heterogeneous environment, the diversity of the student body is reflected in courses throughout the school. When the school ensures access to challenging academic experiences, including AP and ECE for all students, it will support achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Indicator 3

Conclusions

There are formal and informal programs and processes, through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and sometimes assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. Seventy-seven percent of SHS teachers feel that they use the advisory program to form connections with students to personalize learning; seventy-two percent of students feel that their advisor is a person who knows them well. Parents concur that their student feels connected to at least one adult in the building. Students talked frequently about connecting with club advisors, classroom teachers and social workers. Students also report that the principal and assistant principal are accessible to and familiar with the students. While students have an adult in the building that they feel connected with, this connection rarely focuses on assisting students in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. Teachers and students indicated that advisory is frequently used to address social issues, but that learning expectations are only referenced through conversations about standardized testing and course selection. However, revision of the advisory curriculum was undertaken in summer 2016, and some advisory lessons now reflect the Spartan Code, safety, and academic self-reflection. Leadership indicated that advisory is revised every two years with teacher input but would like to involve students more in the process. Because every student has an adult at Somers High School in addition to the school counselor who knows the student well, the emotional needs of students are consistently met. When Somers High School consistently focuses on assisting students in achieving the school's 21st century skills through both formal and informal processes, then all students will be better able to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 5 Indicator 4

Conclusions

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 although not in a systematic and deliberate manner; at times, inconsistently use resources outside the school to maintain currency with best practices; inconsistently utilize the dedicated formal time to implement professional development; and do not have a system in place to assure that teachers apply skills, practices and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction and assessment.

Fifty-five percent of the staff feel that the professional development program at Somers High School enables teachers to acquire and use skills that will improve their instruction and assessment. In addition to formal PD time, teachers are provided with time once in a six-day cycle to meet with their PLC team which can provide opportunity for reflection, inquiry and analysis. The activities provided for this time focus on using data to improve instruction and assessment as well as to revise curriculum. Teachers also take advantage of informal mentoring opportunities and TEAM mentors to provide support to one another. There are increasing opportunities to seek professional development outside of the school. The curriculum coordinator is making efforts to provide additional professional development.

The teachers also utilize SEF grants to fund individual or small group professional development opportunities. Some staff members feel that they are able to participate in outside professional development upon request, although this feeling was inconsistent across the staff. The district provides seven formal professional development opportunities for all staff and approves other opportunities based on teachers' requests. Additionally, there have been multiple opportunities, for teachers to lead and attend professional development sessions surrounding technology. This included multiple sessions which are run by teachers after school. The curriculum director asks as part of the PD approval process, "How the teacher will share what they learn?" This is a new practice. The school leadership talked about looking for a way to systematically ensure that professional development has immediate and direct impact on teaching and learning. Teachers indicated that the sessions presented by their colleagues provided them with skills that they were able to take back and apply to the classroom. However, a consistent and formal accountability system for application of new skills and practices within and throughout curriculum, instruction, and assessment, does not yet exist.

When the principal and professional staff dedicate consistently-focused formal time to implement professional development; systematically and deliberately engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry and analysis of teaching and learning; utilize outside resources to maintain currency with best practices; and implement a system to assure that teachers apply skills, practices and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction and assessment, they will ensure that students are provided with learning opportunities that support the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel

- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 5

Conclusions

School leaders regularly and effectively use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning. Somers High School uses the state's SEED model for evaluation. As such, non-tenured teachers are formally observed three times per year, twice by the building administrators and once by the curriculum director. Tenured teachers are formally observed once each year. All teachers create two student learning objectives that must be tied to standardized assessments, building and district goals. Non-tenured teachers report feeling very supported by administration in regards to their teaching and learning as it pertains to the evaluation model. These members of the faculty are also evaluated by the curriculum director and consistently feel that this is helpful. Tenured teachers' interaction with the evaluation plan is largely through the goal-setting process; some staff report that the goal setting process is not a good fit for their role. As the only two evaluators in the building, the principal and assistant principal typically each conduct 30-40 formal observations each school year and feel this is an area where they could benefit from assistance with the workload. Because school leaders' effectively and regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes, their efforts lead to improved student learning.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 6

Conclusions

The organization of time inconsistently supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers and the learning needs of all students. Somers High School uses a six-day rotating schedule with one period dropping each day with the first two morning periods meet every day. Students feel the design of the schedule fits their needs while teachers feel that the two non-rotating periods results in some inequity among class experience and learning.

PLCs meet every six days at SHS. All departments/teaching teams have PLC time every six days, but in varying time frames. How that time is used is inconsistent and focuses on textbook adoption, summer reading design, PSAT data analysis, administrative tasks, enrollment projects, and budget considerations; at times curriculum, instruction, and assessment are also addressed during PLC time. The purpose of the PLC time is not consistently understood by staff and therefore the use of that time is inconsistent. Teachers report regularly collaborating about students and curriculum in informal settings. Students and parents report that the schedule has limitations that forces students to make choices between learning opportunities. One student shared that she had to choose between an AP science class or her French class because they met at the same time. Another student shared that waiting lists for full classes typically allowed her to get the courses she wanted. Parents shared that students had to make choices between desired electives and the AP classes they feel they need to take. When the organization of time at Somers High School fully supports research-based instruction and professional collaboration, the learning needs of all students will be met.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 7

Conclusions

The student load and class size at Somers High School enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. Over eighty percent of students and parents feel that class size supports student learning needs; seventy-five percent of staff agrees. During student shadowing, observed class sizes were conducive to students having their needs met. Student needs are considered when class size is determined; classes for students needing additional supports are kept intentionally smaller. In one special education class, class size was four students. In a higher-level culinary class, where students are using kitchen equipment, class size was between 5 and 7. In one entry-level science class, which was one of the largest observed classes, class size was 21 students. Overall, the average class size is 14 students, with the largest class in the school totaling 25 students and the smallest class in the school totaling 5. Because SHS maintains appropriate and desirable student load and class sizes, teachers are able to meet the learning needs of individual students.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 5 Indicator 8

Conclusions

The principal and other building leaders provide some instructional leadership rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The principal is enthusiastic about the Spartan Code which exemplifies the school's core values and beliefs. He greets students daily as they enter school, modeling those values and beliefs. The principal relies on the team leader structure as his conduit of information to his faculty, but teachers report that this structure is not as effective as it could be. Teacher leaders are often asked to focus in many different directions and do not feel that they focus on the school's 21st century learning expectations. Students and teachers indicated that they do not feel that decisions are made based on the core values of the school. Teachers did indicate that the building administrators' use of the SEED evaluation model provides support to their implementation of the learning expectations, but that they could still benefit from additional guidance. The evaluation model is not linked to the school's 21st century learning expectations. Building administrators participate on the district data team which drives decisions made about curriculum and student learning. When the principal, along with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs and learning expectations, the school will fully implement the 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 9

Conclusions

Teachers, students, and parents are occasionally involved in informal roles in decision making and in formal, defined roles in decision making that promote responsibility and ownership. Only fifty percent of the staff feels that teachers, students and parents are involved in the decision-making process to promote responsibility and ownership; forty percent of students feel this way. A large percentage of staff and students are undecided about their role in decision making. In interviews with teachers, students and parents stated that they are able to provide input to administration when they want to, and there have been some opportunities to be involved formally. For example, teachers, parents and students were involved in evaluating the mission statement and have participated in the safe school climate committee and Safe Grad. Decision making is shared by way of the Blue Ribbon Panels (i.e. advisory committee, school climate and culture committee, academics committee, technology committee). The "welcome walk-through" is used to provide parents with an opportunity to give feedback to school administration. Administrators also use the Spartan Code survey and Senior Exit survey to inform their decisions. There have been several open forum opportunities provided to staff to voice their concerns at faculty meetings, including monthly new teacher meetings with administration to discuss questions and concerns; however, teachers do not always feel that their input is used to guide decision making. Opportunities also exist for parents and students to provide their input. Teachers look for parent input during parent/teacher meetings. Student input is solicited through the Spartan Crew. Additionally, the PTSA has multiple opportunities to provide input to the school. Administrators welcome and encourage students, parents and staff to participate on these committees. When teachers, students and parents are consistently involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision making, it will promote increased responsibility and ownership.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 10

Conclusions

Teachers frequently exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school that increases students' engagement in learning. Teachers report feeling comfortable going to leadership with ideas on how to improve school culture and student engagement in learning. There have been several teacher driven initiatives: GSA, unity team, and kaleidoscope conference. Teachers also have opportunities to participate in the SPDG leadership team to analyze data and drive school decisions. Teachers are encouraged to apply for Somers Education Fund grants to fund innovation in the classroom. The career counselor creates new opportunities based on students' expressed interests and employment trends. Students report feeling that teacher will often work to provide new programs if they express interest. Because teachers exercise initiative and leadership, they increase students' engagement in learning.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- school board
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 11

Conclusions

The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. The superintendent and building administration meet regularly to discuss issues that arise at the school and to develop policies governing technology, teacher evaluation, and budget concerns. Parents report that the board of education is supportive of Somers High School and especially of important initiatives, such as the 1:1 initiative. Board members feel as though they support decisions made at SHS; teachers indicated the same. Administration works collaboratively with the superintendent and with the support of the board of education, and board members refer to the school administration as the experts and support the administration's work. Because the school board supports the expertise of the collaborative work of the superintendent and principal, the process is collaborative, reflective and constructive and leads to achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Indicator 12

Conclusions

The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. The principal and assistant principal indicated that they feel supported in their decision making, referencing hiring recommendations as an example. Leadership does not feel as though they are forced to make certain decisions. The school board articulated that they do not override the principal's decisions and the building leadership and staff agreed. The school administration cited examples of making decisions based on input and contributions from parents, students and staff. For example, the teachers have ability to give input through the professional development committee and through attendance on hiring committees. Parents are able to have input through attendance in the PTSA, at Board of Education meetings, and also through the Safe School Climate Committee. Students are given input in the school through groups such as the Spartan Crew and direct meetings with administrators. The administrative team is hopeful that this level of support will continue to be the case with the impending superintendent transition. Because the school administration is empowered to make decisions, they are able to effectively lead the school.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school board
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Commendations

Commendation

The heterogeneous learning opportunities for students

Commendation

The inclusiveness of the student body

Commendation

The relationships that exist among the students, staff, and administration

Commendation

The safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture

Commendation

The collegial relationship between administrators and teachers

Commendation

The effective student load and class size that supports student learning

Commendation

The administrative initiative to implement the PBIS Spartan Code

Commendation

The open door policy of administration

Commendation

The initiatives created by teachers to improve student engagement

Commendation

The decision-making authority provided to the principal by the school board and superintendent

Standard 5 Recommendations

Recommendation

Implement consistent opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning

Recommendation

Ensure access for all students to all levels of academic experiences

Recommendation

Ensure that there is a formal process or program that focuses specifically on assisting students in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations

Recommendation

Develop a formal process to ensure that professional development is implemented in teaching and learning

Recommendation

Ensure that the goal setting process is effective, meaningful, and sustainable for all stakeholders

Recommendation

Implement a vision for the purpose of PLC time as it relates to achieving the 21st century learning expectations

Recommendation

Increase opportunities for teachers to provide instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations

Recommendation

Create a clear and defined role for team leaders in the building

Recommendation

Increase formal opportunities for teachers, students and parents to participate in shared decision making

Standard 6 Indicator 1

Conclusions

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. The Spartan Code outlines the civic and social expectations for all students. School counselors meet with all students on an annual- and as-needed basis. The school social worker meets with identified students with special needs as part of the IEP or 504 as well as with other at-risk students. The school social worker also runs various groups for at-risk students each year depending upon student need. Students report that they are able to see guidance counselors as well as the social worker, whenever needed. The students supporting students program enables peer leaders to support the social/emotional well-being of students, and the students meet weekly with the school counselors for additional guidance. Identified students with special needs also receive interventions as outlined by their IEPs, such as resource or co-taught classes. Unidentified at-risk students are referred by teachers through the SRBI process. Data such as NWEA scores, PSAT scores, grades, discipline referrals, attendance, parent feedback, and teacher feedback are used to determine interventions during the SRBI process. Through the SRBI process, interventions such as the PRIDE program, ASPIRE program, reading intervention classes, and math intervention classes can be put in place. Student progress is evaluated during the biweekly SRBI meetings. The learning center provides opportunity for all students to access one-on-one help on an as needed basis. Because Somers High School has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies, all students are supported in accessing the curriculum to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- students
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff

Standard 6 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school regularly provides information to families, including those most in need, about available student support services. The school maintains a website, sends Remind text messages, operates an online payment system for the cafeteria, and emails monthly newsletters to families. Parents are asked to input contact information into InfoSnap. When emails are returned as “undeliverable,” an administrative assistant reaches out to students to acquire a new, working email. For any families who report not using email, the administrative assistant mails home copies of the information. Parents regularly access the school's website or reach out to various staff members to request information as it becomes personally relevant.

The guidance department, health service department, and library/media specialist also maintain pages on the school's website to provide a variety of resources and information about relevant, upcoming events. Teachers utilize resources such as Ebackpack, Google Classroom, and PowerSchool to provide specific information about students' grades, attendance, assessments, and assignment information. Main office staff calls home daily to report absences to families. Warning letters are mailed home when students are increasingly absent from school, and meetings are held when students exceed the attendance policy limits. The school counseling department informs parents about developmentally pertinent information through phone calls, parent meetings, and parent programs and communicates student progress on career exploration through a family log-in code to Naviance. The school nurse communicates regularly with parents, doctors, and the athletic trainer to create and implement individualized health plans. Support services staff informs families of SRBI plans, student meetings, phone calls, and/or parent meetings. When at-risk students are placed into math or English intervention classes, families receive updates on student progress with the student's quarterly report card. Concerns arise about families who do not have internet access at home. This year, the free and reduced lunch application was put online only, and the number of applications dropped significantly. The social worker helped families complete a paper application so they can receive appropriate services. The school nurse assists parents and students on a case-by-case basis. Sixty-eight percent of parents agree that the school provides information about student support services. Because the school regularly provides information to families, students utilize services to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- parents
- school leadership
- school support staff

- Endicott survey
- school website

Standard 6 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Support services staff use technology to deliver a mostly effective range of coordinated services for each student. The school embraces a one-to-one policy so that all teachers are provided a laptop and all students are provided a Chromebook. The IT department coordinates after-school professional development, and teacher presenters and attendees are paid to provide and participate in professional development, respectively. The IT department both maintains the hardware and assists teachers in integrating technology into the curriculum. Teachers are required to update course information on either EBackpack or Google Classroom to reflect information such as homework assignments, lessons, and/or course materials. Google Docs is used to submit behavior and attendance referrals to administration. The library/media specialist teaches students how to use NoodleTools, online databases, and Internet source evaluation. She also supports the school's curriculum by acquiring appropriate resources, such as the UConn databases, the DEVOS video system, audiobooks, and eBooks. The school nurse uses PowerSchool to document student visits; she uses Excel to document physicals, immunizations, concussions, and asthma. School counselors use Naviance to house aspects of the Student Success Plan, including student-created resumes as well as the results of learning styles inventories, personality inventories, and postsecondary searches. The support services staff also utilize 504 Direct and IEP Direct to record and communicate plans for students with special needs. The support services staff use Naviance and Inform to house data such as in-school assessments and standardized test scores, which is consulted when creating appropriate interventions. The SWIS program tracks attendance, behavior, and academic information, which is reviewed when identifying at-risk students, implementing SRBI interventions, and assessing school-wide trends. The school nurse uses an online program in which students can register for participation in athletics. Support services staff use various apps on iPads, speech-to-text software, and other assistive technology to address students' identified needs. Lessons on Odysseyware are used to assign personalized remediation. All academic classrooms are equipped with a soundfield system, which serves to amplify the teacher's voice and decrease background noise. Support services personnel also use a variety of online resources, such as iXL for pre-assessments, Quizlet for formative assessment, and student-scripted and produced videos for post-assessments. The transition program within the special education department utilizes daily assignments on the Chromebooks to write reflections on their job performance and experiences. Concerns arise, however, with students who do not have Internet access at home, as currently students must initiate this disclosure to their teachers and there is no consistent plan to support these students. The varied resources and frequent use of technology at Somers High School provides opportunities for students to meet the school's 21st century learning expectations. When the school ensures that all students are able to appropriately access technology both at home and at school, then they will ensure equitable access to 21st-century learning for all students.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- parents
- central office personnel

Standard 6 Indicator 4

Conclusions

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

The school counselor caseloads are 1:166. Staff and parents expressed concerns that freshmen are only able to meet with their counselor on a limited basis, as she is a 0.5 FTE position; however, students feel that their counseling needs are consistently and appropriately met. The school counselors implement their curriculum through individual, group, and advisory lessons as well as through evening workshops/presentations. The school counselors meet annually with each student for an entire class period as part of their planned developmental program. This program focuses on a range of topics, from career interests and personal goals, to college selection. While the target for these programs is the entire school population, more time and focus is spent with students in grades 11 and 12. Students feel comfortable seeking out their counselor for additional meetings, and the school counselor is typically able to meet to address the student's need within a day. The part-time school-to-career specialist assists students with the career development component of the school counseling program as students avail themselves of a variety of job shadowing and internship experiences.

The school counselors collaborate with the school social worker to provide counseling services for students on IEPs and 504s. The school social worker also counsels at-risk students, typically determined through the SRBI process, but also as determined through collaboration with the school counseling staff. The school social worker also provides group counseling based upon identified student needs. When appropriate, the school counseling staff makes referrals to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers. A *Somers High School Counseling Resources & Hotlines* pamphlet is available on the school's website.

The school counseling staff uses ongoing, relevant assessment data such as NWEA and PSAT scores, grades, and attendance when creating intervention plans as part of the SRBI process. Data collected through student evaluations of school counseling-sponsored programs and the Senior Exit survey on Naviance are used to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. Because of the range and effective implementation of the school counseling services, students are equipped with the academic, career, and personal/social attitudes, knowledge, and skills to make well-informed postsecondary decisions.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- students
- parents
- school support staff

Standard 6 Indicator 5

Conclusions

The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel who provide preventative health care services and frequently provide direct intervention services; frequently use an appropriate referral process; frequently conduct ongoing health assessments; and rarely use ongoing, 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's health services staff consists of one full-time nurse who provides responsive care for ailments throughout the day. The school nurse provides scoliosis testing to freshman boys only, as the girls receive their screening in 8th grade. At the start of each school year, the school nurse informs faculty of students with medical needs via email or a written explanation of concerns. The school nurse works collaboratively with doctors, families, and the school's athletic trainer to create and disseminate medical plans for students in need. The school nurse also provides annual training to staff at the start of each school year to cover topics such as how to use EpiPens and the AED as well as training in blood-borne pathogens, glucagon (related to diabetes), and first aid. She also administers medication and assists diabetic students in checking their blood per doctor's orders. When relevant, she will attend 504 meetings. Students feel comfortable going to the nurse as needed, and the nurse makes every effort to ensure that students return to class as quickly as possible after a visit to her office.

The nurse will refer students to physicians, urgent care, ER, or 211 as needed. The school nurse maintains physicals and ensures that all students have updated physicals by the start of their junior year. If students cannot afford their mandated physical, the school nurse refers the student to school's medical director to receive a free physical. The school nurse also maintains data for mandated state reports, such as asthma, concussions, immunizations, and the trends of time spent by students in the nurse's office. Data are also reviewed to determine athletic eligibility; however data is not reviewed in a formal fashion to improve services. Students do not feel that their input is considered for the purpose of improving services; additionally, parents do not feel that there is a process for family input in the improvement of services. Because Somers High School's health services are adequately staffed and are able to provide a range of health services, students health needs are reliably met. When Somers High Schools health services utilizes assessment data, including feedback from the school community, then services will continuously grow and improve, ensuring that students are able to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- students
- parents
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 6 Indicator 6

Conclusions

Library/media services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff; provide a wide range of digital 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; and conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations; however, the library/media services are rarely integrated into curriculum and instructional practices.

The library/media center is staffed by one full-time certified library/media specialist and one full-time paraprofessional. The library/media specialist teaches three lessons to each freshman English class on database use, Internet source evaluation, and finding source material. The library/media specialist attempts to integrate its services further into the curriculum and instructional practices; however, collaboration is limited. Students report that they often use the library media/center for personal reasons, such as using the available computers, but that they rarely utilize the services within the context of their classes. Staff report that classroom/media center collaboration is infrequent across grades and subject areas.

The library/media center provides a wide range of resources, such as databases, ebooks, print resources, a video system, and loaner laptops, and is open from 7am to 3:30pm. Additional resources are added to the library/media center as dictated by teacher and student request and depending on available funding. When needed resources are not available, the library/media specialist takes advantage of the interlibrary loan system. Students use the library/media center before, during, and after school to utilize the printers, computer lab, and work space, but they rarely use the library/media center's resources or the expertise of the library/media specialist. In response to an increase in digital learning outside of the library/media center with the use of Chromebooks, the library media/specialist has increased access to online databases and digital books.

Because Somers High School has an adequately staffed library media center that provides a wide range of materials and services, students are able to access resources that support the school's 21st century learning expectations. When the library/media services are consistently and purposefully integrated into curriculum and instructional practices, students will be better supported in acquiring the school's 21st century skills.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website

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; consistently provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students; and consistently perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, sometimes including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

The support services staff consists of six special education teachers, of which there is a special education team leader, a transition program teacher, an ASPIRE program teacher, and a PRIDE program teacher. In addition, there are six paraprofessionals and a full-time social worker; there is also a school psychologist and speech and language therapist who split time with other schools in district. The school counselors serve as case managers to the students identified with a Section 504 Plan and conduct annual reviews. The school counselors also identify and acquire resources for ELL students when they enroll, and support plans are created on an individual basis depending on the needs of each student.

The support services staff collaborate with teachers through informal processes. The co-teachers do not have common planning time, so they tend to plan by exchange of emails. Paraprofessionals are relied upon to provide feedback to teachers and case managers. The case managers reach out to teachers of identified students when there are concerns with the student, and vice versa. The case managers and paraprofessionals also collaborate with teachers in creating necessary modifications. The school social worker provides a synopsis of students on her caseload to their teachers at the start of each school year.

All students are scheduled into classes that provide the most inclusive, least restrictive setting. Identified students who require support in specific academic classes either have the support of a paraprofessional or are scheduled for co-taught courses in the mainstream setting. The PRIDE program is open to at-risk students identified with executive functioning deficits and/or emotional/behavioral concerns. After two periods in the program at the start of the day, the students complete the rest of their courses in the mainstream setting. The ASPIRE program is open to both general and special education students in which students take online classes and receive counseling services. Students in the Transition program spend two classes at the start of the day learning life and career-oriented skills, spend the majority of their day in the community, and then return to school for self-reflection. They also run the school store. ELL students and students identified with 504 Plans spend their day in mainstream courses. All students are also able to participate in unified basketball.

The support services staff use a range of data to improve services, such as adhering to the mandated triennial testing as well as NWEA, PSAT, and SAT results. Student grades are also consulted. The support staff utilize teacher feedback, student meetings, and periodic reviews of grades in PowerSchool to evaluate the success of their students with IEPs, 504 Plans, and ELL support. Because of the various interventions, inclusive opportunities, and use of relevant data, identified students are able to access appropriate resources to meet the school's learning expectations. When the support staff formally collaborates with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff, students will be better supported with a consistent team approach so as to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school support staff

Standard 6 Commendations

Commendation

The availability of support staff to address the social/emotional needs of at-risk students

Commendation

The variety of interventions available to support student learning

Commendation

The regular collaboration of the SRBI team to create and review interventions

Commendation

The varied and frequent communication with families about available support services

Commendation

The technology resources that facilitate student learning

Commendation

The Transition program that affords authentic, real-world skills and experiences to students

Commendation

The comfortable and safe environment that exists in health services

Standard 6 Recommendations

Recommendation

Ensure that technology services support students who do not have Internet access

Recommendation

Collect and utilize assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve health services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations

Recommendation

Integration library/media services into the school's curriculum

Recommendation

Implement formal collaboration among service providers

Standard 7 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The community and the district's governing body consistently provides 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. Through the program of studies, the school offers a wide range of academic programming inclusive of Advanced Placement and intervention classes. Extracurricular clubs and athletic teams are representative of diverse student needs and populations. The school has maintained staffing and support-program staffing through consistent budget allocations for these areas. Sixty-seven percent of Somers High School students agree that the school is well-staffed and feel that there is a wide range of programs and services offered. Information technology staff has created professional development opportunities, and teachers seek individual professional development in their discipline. Professional development funding has been maintained within the budget and increased by 5.6 percent over the past year. The Somers Educational Fund has provided funding for professional development outside of the district's budget. Curriculum development, under the leadership of the curriculum director, is ongoing. It is evident that the IT department provides extensive support for technology. The board of education has provided extensive funding for student technology and infrastructure. Departmental supplies have increased by 15 percent over the past year. Because Somers High School has dependable and adequate funding, students are ensured access to a wide-range of educational programs, services, and opportunities.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 7 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school formally develops, plans and funds programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant, to properly maintain and replace equipment, and to keep the school clean on a daily basis; however, no formal process of cataloguing equipment exists. Through the use of School Dude and the Long Range Plan, the school develops and plans for the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant in both the short- and long-term. The outside facility evaluation done by CREC has assisted in facilitating a focus for long-range planning. Routine air quality, electrical, plumbing, and fire safety systems are inspected and repaired as necessary. The school's ability to efficiently and promptly address building concerns is assisted by the addition of a non-contracted position. The school has extensively funded the maintenance of the technology education department's equipment. Ninety-four percent of the staff and 75.5 percent of students report that the school is clean and well-maintained. School custodial cleaning schedule and building inspection reports indicate a deliberate effort to keep the school clean on a daily basis. However, with the exception of the instructional technology department, no school-wide cataloguing system exists. Because of the school's commitment to maintain and create facilities that are safe, clean, and well-maintained, Somers High School supports safe programs for students. When the school properly catalogs equipment, maintenance and replacement of equipment will be documented and ensured.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 7 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The community provides consistent and dependable funding and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements. Sixty percent of departments at SHS agree that there is adequate staff and faculty available to support their programs and serve their student populations. The school has recently included a 0.4 FTE art position. Included in budgeting and long range planning are the following increased positions for the 2017-2018 budget: 0.5 FTE social studies teacher, 0.6 FTE world languages teacher, and 1.0 FTE reading specialist. Enrollment projections suggest enrollment will increase to 500 students. Within contract negotiations, extracurricular activities can be negotiated on a yearly basis. Additional stipended positions have been created, including school store coordinator and ski club. The district provides 1:1 technology access to all students. Students (85.7 percent) agree that the school has sufficient computers which are available before, during, and after school hours. The IT and wireless infrastructure has recently been updated to support new technology use. Sixty-eight percent of the staff agree that the school has a long-range plan to address facilities, future programs, services, staffing levels, and capital improvements. The town of Somers contracted with CREC to complete an in-depth school facility review to gain a better understanding of the future budgetary demands facing the community and educational facilities, and the school uses the CREC facility study to identify long-range facility needs. Additionally, staff is able to access Somers Education Foundation funds for items related to facilities improvement. Because the community consistently funds the school budget and the school implements a long-range plan, the students have access to programming, services, and staffing that supports 21st century learning.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey

Standard 7 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the school budget, however not all faculty are actively involved in the process. Fifty-seven percent of the staff report that their input is not considered when developing the budget. While some teachers are asked what they need, many teachers feel their input does not impact the budget process. The instructional supply account increased in the last year by 15 percent based upon staff approved requests systemwide. Staff submit both short-term and long-term budgetary needs. The administration meets with the superintendent and business manager to communicate budget needs. Teacher and staff interviews indicate regular updates on budget status do not occur. Administration meets with team leaders regarding the budget process. Teacher leaders are expected to disseminate budget information to their respective teams. When all faculty are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget, staff will be able to provide instruction that continues to meet all 21st century learning needs of students.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 7 Indicator 5

Conclusions

The school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services. Seventy-six percent of students, staff (75.5 percent) and parents (87 percent) agree that the facility adequately supports programs and services. The school food preparation and dining services are self-sufficient and adequately equipped. The library media center provides a range of sources that support the curriculum. The school provides ample space for industrial arts, arts, and technology education classes. The unique school campus setting allows high school students to participate in education-related career exploration and volunteer tutoring activities available within the campus. The campus outdoor space is well-maintained and provides safe parking for students and staff. Although there are a few teachers and staff who do not have their own designated classroom, adequate space is allotted for delivery of instruction. Art and technology education classes are well-maintained and provide ample opportunities for application of 21st century learning. The science labs are at times cramped and are seen by some staff members to be outdated, but they allow for the adequate instruction of science to occur. Because the school site and plant support the delivery of high quality of school programs and services, students have access to an education that supports 21st century learning.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- facility tour
- teachers
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 7 Indicator 6

Conclusions

The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations in many areas. School administration completed an OSHA Hazmat plan. As part of the Capital Improvement Plan, the facilities has undergone an extensive fire alarm upgrade. This process brings the school's alarm system to meet the new standards including code requirements and an emergency lighting system for hearing impaired individuals within all areas of the buildings. The school provides current documentation which confirms the school meets all applicable federal and state laws. All areas of the school have adequate ventilation, temperature control, and air quality. The school addresses regular repairs and maintenance in a timely fashion using School Dude. A community safety committee conducted a school security and safety plan with implementation of recommendations ongoing. The All-Hazards School Security and Safety Plan is the official policy of Somers High School. Conducted in 2015-2016, the plan supports the school's commitment to review its schools' emergency prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery procedures relevant to natural and human caused disasters. The school security and safety committee was responsible for the development of the plan. The science department indicates that there are specific safety concerns that need to be addressed such as eye wash stations, emergency showers, exhaust hoods, safe glassware, and locking cabinets in all science classrooms. In one classroom, an eyewash station is non-functioning. To comply with appropriate safety standards, teachers in science exchange classrooms when conducting labs. District staff reports that science labs are, in some cases, outdated and in need of remodeling. In addition, there is no designated chemical hygiene officer at this time, as required by OSHA. Because the school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws, they are able to meet all legal responsibilities. When the school adheres to local fire, health, and safety regulations in every classroom, then student safety in all areas of the building will be ensured.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 7 Indicator 7

Conclusions

Many professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and somewhat reach out to those families who have been less connected with the school. Through a variety of means, including telephone, email, and online platforms like Powerschool and Naviance, 60 percent of parents and 66 percent of staff members agree that the professional staff actively engages the family as a partner in each student's education. Electronic communications such as the principal's monthly newsletter and the TIDE (Technology, Innovation, Design and Engineering) publications help facilitate, publicize and promote student activities, and parent and community engagement. Although the high school reaches out to the parents and community through the use of technology (email, PowerSchool, Naviance), there is no formal, systemic practice to reach out to parents of students who are not engaged in their education. Parents report that, unless they are fully invested in their children's educational process, it might be easy to miss important meetings or events; additionally, parents feel that some staff members are more proactive than others in reaching out to them for support. The school social worker consistently and consciously engages with students and parents who may be less connected to the school community. Staff members routinely contact parents if a student is performing below a C- average in a course. The attendance secretary contacts parents when attendance is an issue and the assistant principal meets with parents on a case-by-case basis. Parents are able to attend an Open House in the fall as well as parent conferences one time per year. When the school develops a formal, systematic process for all staff to actively engage parents and families who may be less connected, they will ensure that all students have access to 21st century learning.

Sources of Evidence

- teachers
- parents
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 7 Indicator 8

Conclusions

The school formally develops productive parent, community, and business partnerships that support student learning. Currently, the school has more than a dozen firmly established parent, community, business and higher education partnerships and affiliations to support student learning. The school partners with Asnuntuck Community College and UConn for college credit programs. Parent partnerships include the PTA, the Somers Music Patrons, the Somers Athletic Club and the Somers Education Foundation. The location of the K-12 schools creates opportunities for high school students to develop post-secondary skills. For example, some students are able to take part in job shadowing opportunities within other schools. The post-grad transition and career specialist utilize resources to make connections in the community. Surrounding towns and businesses support the school. Geissler's Supermarket, United Technologies Aerospace, Conval Incorporated, and Dymotech have all developed strong working partnerships with Somers High School. Non-profit volunteer opportunities on the school campus exist, with students able to explore interests both within other schools as well as within the town's public library. The career exploration specialist establishes internships and job shadows. Local business and industry provide additional funding for the technology education initiative at the value of \$4,000 to \$6,000 yearly. Geisler's supermarket provides a percentage of all sales to support the Somers Education Foundation. Because Somers High School consciously develops productive parent, business, and community partnerships, programming and services are available to enhance student learning opportunities.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 7 Commendations

Commendation

The range of academic support programs available to all students

Commendation

The range of technology support, equipment, and access for teachers and students to support the learning expectations

Commendation

The safe, clean environment which is a result of the purposeful cleaning and maintenance plan.

Commendation

The use of projected enrollment to proactively staff the building

Commendation

The campus layout which provides unique community opportunities for students

Commendation

The partnerships within the greater school community that provide increased opportunities for students

Commendation

Commendation

Standard 7 Recommendations

Recommendation

Implement a formal process to properly catalogue equipment

Recommendation

Involve all faculty and building administrators in the development and implementation of the budget

Recommendation

Ensure compliance with local fire, health and safety regulations within science classrooms

Recommendation

Implement a formal, systematic process to engage families who have been less connected with the school

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

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

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

Roster of Team Members

Chair(s)

Chair: Mr. Garrett Dukette - Ashford School

Assistant Chair: Mrs. Mary Pierangeli - Shepherd Hill Regional High School

Team Members

Rebeca Aubrey - Ashford School

Steve Autieri - Suffield Public Schools

Margaret Bastiaanse - Granby Memorial High School

Caitlin Booth - Mt. Hope High School

Mr. Michael Devoll - Old Rochester Regional High School

Doug Hutton - Glastonbury High School

Doreen Lopez - Waterbury Arts Magnet School

Julie Luby - Trumbull High School

Lita Motroni - Scituate High School

Margaret Murphy - Fairfield Warde High School

Patricia Pires - Berlin High School

Jackie Russell - East Hampton High School