



Maine School of Science and Mathematics

Report to the Board of Trustees

from the Ad Hoc Committee on Best Practices for
Community Health and Student Development
for Residential High School Student Communities

May 2019

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 Joel Pike
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1. Statement of Fundamental Responsibility

An essential foundation for effective academic and social achievement in a residential high school community is the assurance of a healthy and safe environment for its students and other community members. The Board of Trustees of the Maine School of Science and Mathematics (“MSSM”) recognizes its obligation to maintain such an environment. Students and their parents should feel that this fundamental obligation has the Board’s highest attention.

The health and safety of a residential high school community is influenced by many factors. Paramount among these are the members of the community itself and the interactions between community members, whether formally as part of student instruction or informally during the daily activities of the school. The school’s written policies and the design and use of its systems and facilities are also key factors in assuring a healthy and safe community. Oversight responsibility for membership in the community and for the appropriate policies, practices and facilities lies with the MSSM Board of Trustees, working closely with the school’s Executive Director.

2. The Committee

The Ad Hoc Committee on Best Practices for Community Health and Student Development for Residential High School Student Communities (the “Committee”) was established at the March 2, 2019, MSSM Board of Trustees meeting. The Committee’s charge was to identify “best practices” at residential institutions outside of MSSM who care for high school age students. Trustee David Coit was authorized to organize the Committee and the research project and to report its findings back to the Board of Trustees at its May 2019 meeting.

Mr. Coit secured Marian Reagan and Joel Pike as members of the Committee. Both are parents of recent MSSM graduates (one boy and one girl). Ms. Reagan and Mr. Pike are also prospective members of the MSSM Board of Trustees, subject only to confirmation by the Maine Legislature’s Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.

The Committee sought and received advice and support from several other members of the MSSM community in this effort, for which it is most grateful. A list of the participants and principal resources used in the preparation of this project are included in Appendix IV.

3. The Uniqueness of MSSM

The Committee recognizes that the Maine School of Science and Mathematics is a unique public educational institution that cannot necessarily adopt all of the best practices employed at other residential high schools. This uniqueness needs to be kept in mind as the findings and recommendations made in this report are considered by the Board of Trustees.

As a magnet Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (“STEM”) school, MSSM instruction emphasizes academic achievement over a broader set of activities (e.g.: athletics, theatre, etc.) typical of many private residential high schools. MSSM is also a small community compared to most other residential high schools, creating a somewhat unique relationship between faculty and students and among students themselves. As a state sponsored school, MSSM’s resources are limited by the financial support that the state makes available to the school. These factors dictate that MSSM must define its own social contract as a community within the context of its uniqueness and the resources available to it.

Maintaining a healthy campus culture over time is made more challenging at a residential high school by the constantly changing membership of the community, defined by annual turnover of students (as much as 30%) and to a lesser extent faculty and staff (10-20%). In the face of the changing makeup of the school community, a successful program requires clearly established policies and objectives and a continuous process of training and education of new community members.

Understanding these dynamics, the Committee identified several best practices that it feels are worthy of consideration by the MSSM Board of Trustees. Some of these can be pursued within the resources currently available to the school and others would require additional financial support from the State of Maine.

4. Best Practices Matrix

To organize its work, the Committee established a Best Practices Matrix (the “Matrix”) to identify the principal areas deserving of attention (Appendix I). Three community groups were identified as having unique interests and influence on the culture of the community: Students, Faculty and Staff, and Trustees and the Executive Director. The Committee felt that the Executive Director’s role and influence over community culture straddles both the faculty and staff community and the Board of Trustees but felt his placement with the Board of Trustees was appropriate for this exercise.

For each of these three community groups, four categories of influence were identified for attention: People, Practice, Place (facilities) and Policy. The Committee explored each intersection (comprising 12 “Areas of Attention”) of the three community groups and the four categories of influence as a way to organize its own thinking and to solicit best practice ideas from others.

5. General Statement of Findings

The most important finding from the Committee’s study was the increasing emphasis that some boarding schools are placing on developing the whole student. While academic achievement and getting into chosen colleges continues to be a very high-level objective of most elite high schools, preparing students for life after they leave the academic world has become an increasingly important mission. This trend is a central theme in Four-Dimensional Education, by Charles Fadel, whose consulting team is redesigning the Waterville, ME, school curriculum to better prepare its high school students for life after graduation.

The other important finding from the study of best practices at residential high schools was the clear intersection between effective student development and a healthy campus culture. Significant effort and resources are being invested by some schools in the learning and exercising of important personal life skills. Student participation in the establishment and enforcement of school life policies is emphasized as important learning experiences for students while they are members of the school community. Student participation in the process of defining and being responsible for a school’s culture engenders a sense of ownership in its outcome. And the daily practice of constructive interpersonal behavior between community members solidifies the culture.

In the process of exploring each Area of Attention, it became clear to the Committee that several areas have more influence on campus culture and student development than others. The constant interactions between and among members of the campus community (the “Practice” column in the Matrix) was identified as deserving of particular attention. The second most important influence was identified as the community membership (the “People” column in the Matrix), especially the make-up of the student body. The other two “P” categories, Place (facilities) and Policy (documented expectations of behavior), each also play an influential role in establishing a best practices community culture. The Committee’s complete list of best practices findings in each Area of Attention is included in Appendix II, Best Practices Findings and Considerations.

6. Recommendations

The Committee has three specific recommendations for the Board of Trustees to consider:

- Portrait of an MSSM Graduate

MSSM graduates are entering an increasingly complex world. To navigate it successfully, they will need not just technical skills and content knowledge, but the ability to work with diverse groups, communicate effectively, persevere through adversity and setbacks, and respond to rapid technological, social, and environmental changes. Today's employers are demanding these skills, and leading educational institutions such as Stanford, MIT, and Olin College are integrating them into their programs.

To address this need, the Committee recommends engaging in a school-wide process of creating the "Portrait of an MSSM Graduate" (the "Portrait"). This effort should involve all three community groups to establish broad-based ownership of the process. The over-arching objective of the school's commitment to the Portrait would be to optimize each graduating student's preparedness for life beyond MSSM and beyond college, as they become individual contributors to society.

Elements of the Portrait should include qualities such as self-awareness and interpersonal skills. It should also promote attitudes and behaviors that are additive to communities they will encounter throughout their life's journey.

The Portrait of an MSSM Graduate would establish guiding principles against which community policies and practices would be created and carried out. These policies and practices should be incorporated into daily campus life and be considered of equal importance to academic achievement and preparedness for college. The Portrait would be a living contract, subject to modification over time.

- Mission Appropriate Student

The Maine Legislature created MSSM to serve "certain high-achieving high school students" who need "a challenging educational experience" that their sending schools cannot provide. By serving these students, MSSM is a unique and important institution within Maine's portfolio of public educational institutions. Recognizing that MSSM has finite resources, the Committee recommends defining the characteristics of a student applicant who represents the academic, social and attitudinal qualifications intended by the Legislature.

A mission appropriate student applicant should be prepared for the academic rigor of MSSM and for the unique social environment of a relatively small and highly motivated student body. Equally as important, a mission appropriate student should be willing to actively engage in the process of acquiring the personal abilities established in the Portrait of an MSSM Graduate.

- Committee on Community Health and Student Development

The Board of Trustees should consider the creation of a permanent sub-committee chartered to establish policy and practice recommendations on Community Health and Student Development. Students, faculty and staff should participate in the work of the committee. This Committee would be responsible for establishing metrics for monitoring the status of Community Health and Student Development, and for providing regular reports to the full Board of Trustees on any progress or challenges as they arise.

7. Summary Comments

MSSM's success over time will be defined less by the scholastic achievements of its students than by the contributions its graduates make to the communities they encounter during their lifetimes. The path to becoming a highly functional member of society will be significantly impacted by the skills and attitudes our students acquire during the very formative years when they are students at MSSM. Our opportunity is to create an environment where these personal attributes can be acquired.

The Committee feels that MSSM has an opportunity to add substantively to the developmental experience of its students by focusing more attention on campus culture. Its smaller size affords MSSM an opportunity to achieve a tighter set of community objectives. And the intellect and maturity of the students who attend MSSM provide the fundamental building blocks for the creation of a high achieving community, both academically and socially.

Given the short time frame of the study, the Committee wants the Board to recognize that this report is by no means definitive and that areas of particular interest to the Board may well need more discovery as these ideas are considered.

We would like to thank the Board of Trustees for authorizing this effort. We hope that this report contributes to the Board's ongoing commitment to the health of the school community and especially to the social and academic development of the students in our care.

APPENDIX

I. Best Practices Matrix

In an effort to cover all of the major factors influencing Community Health and Student Development, the Committee identified 12 Areas of Attention, as defined in the Best Practices Matrix. Each Area of Attention includes a statement of the Committee's Objective, the study's Best Practices Findings, and the Committee's suggested Considerations for MSSM.

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Maine School of Science and Mathematics

Best Practices Matrix

Community Health and Student Development

Community	People	Practice	Place	Policy
Students	Objective build a "mission appropriate" student body	Objective engage students in enhancing the school's social capital	Objective infrastructure to support community health and student development	Objective document behavior expectations for student engagement in the community
	Best Practices Findings 1. focus on social maturity of applicants 2. set expectations in the admissions process 3. careful screening of applicants	Best Practices Findings 1. student engagement in setting policies 2. teaching new students classes on culture 3. significant community responsibilities	Best Practices Findings 1. multiple venues for student interaction 2. commitment to student safety and security 3. student responsibility for self-policing	Best Practices Findings 1. clear and complete Student Handbook 2. statement of behavior expectations
Faculty, Staff and Administrators	Considerations 1. define "mission appropriate" student 2. expand applicant pool 3. review admissions practices for fit	Considerations 1. define "Portrait of an MSSM graduate" 2. greater student role in community culture 3. year appropriate social skill classes	Considerations 1. have appropriate student meeting venues 2. establish safety rules for each venue 3. involve students in enforcement	Considerations 1. review and update Student Handbook 2. statement of behavior expectations
	Objective build a "mission appropriate" faculty and staff	Objective maintain a constant high standard for community and student behavior	Objective academic and residential infrastructure to optimize engagement with students	Objective document behavior expectations for faculty & staff engagement in the community
Board of Trustees and Executive Director	Best Practices Findings 1. look for "triple threat" faculty talent 2. maintain on-staff psychiatrist(s) 3. significant faculty res life engagement	Best Practices Findings 1. "always on" teaching of cultural values 2. commitment to teacher training programs 3. significant dorm and advisor responsibility 4. regular faculty meetings on student welfare	Best Practices Findings 1. residential proximity to students 2. commitment to quality of residences	Best Practices Findings 1. clear and complete Faculty & Staff Handbook 2. faculty & staff development expectations 3. complete position and role descriptions
	Considerations 1. review/update job descriptions 2. clearly define non-academic engagement 3. appropriate year level res life staffing 4. aggressive marketing of openings	Considerations 1. define "Portrait of an MSSM graduate" 2. non-academic responsibility for faculty & staff 3. teacher training programs 4. teacher engagement beyond MSSM	Considerations 1. new dormitory design & construction 2. new faculty & staff housing 3. update and improve access for existing meeting areas	Considerations 1. clear and complete Faculty & Staff Handbook 2. expand website with new content
Board of Trustees and Executive Director	Objective optimize Board membership for specific experience, diversity and active engagement	Objective high level of Board of Trustee focus on community health and student development	Objective meeting venues and agendas to optimize Board of Trustees engagement	Objective establishment of policies and oversight to assure community health and student development
	Best Practices Findings 1. constant search for board talent 2. documented expectations of members 3. strong orientation of new members	Best Practices Findings 1. sub-committee on Community Life 2. regular reporting metrics to Trustees on community health & student development	Best Practices Findings 1. most regular meetings on campus 2. multiple day meetings include social events	Best Practices Findings 1. regular review and re-assessment of policies 2. commitment to reporting and oversight
Priority Areas for Attention Recommendations	Considerations 1. constant search for new board talent 2. document expectations of members 3. improve orientation of new members 4. review state policy on membership	Considerations 1. define "Portrait of an MSSM graduate" 2. Cmty on Cmnty Health & Student Dylpmnt 3. establish monitoring metrics 4. regularly report metrics to Board of Trustees	Considerations 1. poll Trustees on meeting locations 2. consider addition of social events	Considerations 1. review of all policies 2. review committee charters 3. establish reporting policies
	Priority Areas for Attention Recommendations	\$ Areas requiring financial investment		

II. Best Practice Findings & Considerations

Students – people

Priority Area for Attention

Objective:

Build a “mission appropriate” student body

Best Practice Findings:

1. focus on social maturity of applicants
2. set expectations in the admissions process
3. careful screening of applicants

Considerations:

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| 1. define "mission appropriate" student | Recommendation |
| 2. expand applicant pool | \$\$\$ |
| 3. review admissions practices for fit | |

Comments:

The best chance to align the make-up of student body with the school’s objectives is to admit mission appropriate students. The Committee recommends that the school undertake an effort to define a “mission appropriate” student, and that it review the application process to help identify students who meet the mission appropriate definition.

Increasing the pool of applicants would allow the school to be more selective in its admission practices and could result in a student body better aligned with the school’s mission. Expanding the applicant pool would probably require financial support from the state to fund room and board expenses for Maine residents.

Screening techniques (testing, parent interviews and essays, student interviews, targeted application questions, etc.) have proven to be helpful in the screening process at other boarding schools, but these tools are individually and collectively far from foolproof.

Students – practice

Priority Area for Attention

Objective:

Engage students in enhancing the school's social capital

Best Practice Findings:

1. student engagement in setting policies
2. older students teach new students' classes on culture
3. significant community responsibilities

Considerations:

1. define "Portrait of an MSSM graduate" Recommendation
2. greater student role in community culture
3. year appropriate social skill classes

Comments:

Student engagement was emphasized as an important contributor to best practices in the establishment and maintenance of a healthy community culture and in teaching students the lessons appropriate to building their individual non-academic qualities.

Effective student participation includes a steady progression of community responsibilities as a student progresses from first year to graduation. First year student emphasis is on teaching basic life skills (self-awareness, acceptance and respect for all variety of community members, conflict resolution, when to take or avoid risks, teamwork, etc...). Increased student responsibility and authority grows with maturity and an individual's record of positive community contributions.

The definition of the Portrait of an MSSM Graduate is recommended as a pivotal step for the school to take toward achieving Community Health and Student Development. The students should be involved as an active partner with the other two community groups (Faculty & Staff and and Board of Trustees & Executive Director) in defining the Portrait.

The Portrait of a Graduate concept was established at The Taft School about a decade ago. The Taft Portrait of a Graduate is available on the Taft School website and in Appendix III.

Objective:

Infrastructure to support community health and student development

Best Practice Findings:

1. multiple venues for student interaction
2. commitment to student safety and security
3. student responsibility for self-policing

Considerations:

1. have appropriate student meeting venues
2. establish safety rules for each venue
3. involve students in enforcement

Comments:

Facilities appropriate for the safe congregation of students in groups of varying sizes was often mentioned as an important contributor to student mental health. Safety concerns are partially achieved by establishing clear and carefully executed policies, especially for couples seeking some privacy from scrutiny by the larger community. A more difficult to implement contributor to safe space management is self-policing by students. Such a process requires a high degree of student ownership.

Spaces are needed not only for academics, collaboration and creativity, but also to rest and relax (the 3 D's: de-stress, decompress, and disconnect). Having spaces to accommodate the 3 D's would help students deal with anxiety, stress and other mental health related issues.

At some level, creating safe spaces for the congregation of multiple different social groups is only possible with an increased financial investment, depending on existing facilities space and configuration.

Students – policy

Objective:

Document behavior expectations for student engagement in the community

Best Practice Findings:

1. clear and complete Student Handbook
2. statement of behavior expectations

Considerations:

1. review and update Student Handbook
2. statement of behavior expectations

Comments:

Best practices are pretty standard and revolve around having clearly articulated and up-to-date handbooks for students and parents to understand policies, standards and expectations of residential life behavior for staff and students.

Students should also be included in the planning and development of policies, expectations and residential life programs.

Having students (and possibly parents) sign a summary statement indicating their understanding and agreement to the contents of the Student Handbook seems like a valuable action item.

Faculty & Staff - people

Objective:

Build a “mission appropriate” faculty and staff

Best Practice Findings:

1. Look for "triple threat" faculty talent
2. maintain on-staff psychiatrist(s)
3. significant faculty residential life engagement

Considerations:

1. review/update job descriptions
2. clearly define non-academic engagement
3. appropriate year level residential life staffing
4. aggressive marketing of faculty and staff openings

Comments:

Many private boarding schools tout their “triple threat” approach to the engagement of faculty with students, where faculty members are active as teachers, coaches and advisors with students. Faculty also generally have greater residential life responsibilities, with appropriate compensation and a significant investment in the quality of life for faculty. Most private schools are large enough and have the financial resources to support full time psychiatrist(s) on their medical staff.

“The school should have sufficient services and personnel to support the emotional, social and psychological needs of the students”, quoted from the NEASC Standard.

As a general statement, talented faculty and staff seek out schools with academically motivated and socially mature students. Due to somewhat different job descriptions and residential facilities options, MSSM has a somewhat different applicant pool compared to private boarding schools. Nonetheless, more emphasis can always be put on expanding the applicant pool and trying to optimize the fit between applicants and the needs of the school.

Attracting top talent in any organization requires a concerted and constant effort. Elements of success include maintaining an active networking effort in the academic community, good communications about the school’s success and mission, well written job descriptions, quality of life investments (e.g.: housing), benefits, training programs, opportunities for career mobility, and many other considerations.

Faculty & Staff – practice

Priority Area for Attention

Objectives:

Maintain a constant high standard for community and student behavior

Best Practice Findings:

1. "always on" teaching of cultural values
2. commitment to teacher training programs
3. significant dorm and advisor responsibility
4. regular faculty meetings on student welfare

Considerations:

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1. define "Portrait of an MSSM graduate" | Recommendation |
| 2. non-academic responsibility for faculty and staff | |
| 3. teacher training programs | \$\$\$ |
| 4. teacher engagement beyond MSSM | |

Comments:

Most successful private boarding schools have considerably greater financial resources than MSSM. This allows these schools to invest in their faculty and staff through training, better residential facilities and higher salaries. Teacher job descriptions emphasize both academic and non-academic engagement with students throughout the day and on weekends.

This is a somewhat different approach than the MSSM model of teacher-student engagement. If the school wants to evolve toward increasing emphasis on non-academic student development, the teacher job descriptions should probably be reviewed and updated, and some level of teacher training and development should be considered to support the added responsibilities.

These changes in the school's developmental objectives for its students would be defined in large part by establishing a new "Portrait of an MSSM Graduate". The process of defining the Portrait would be a community-wide activity with significant involvement by the faculty and staff.

Faculty & Staff - place

Objectives:

Academic and residential infrastructure to optimize engagement with students

Best Practice Findings:

1. residential proximity to students
2. commitment to quality of residences

Considerations

1. new dormitory design and construction \$\$\$
2. new faculty and staff housing \$\$\$
3. update and improve access for existing meeting areas

Comments:

A main driver for the success of a school is the interaction between the student and the faculty and staff. While traditional learning environments (classrooms) still have their need especially in a STEM school related to labs, there are also benefits to having non-traditional learning environments that cross the lines between academic and residential activities. A mix of these environments should be available with appropriate support equipment and other resources. The faculty needs a workspace, but this does not need to be the classroom.

A best practice dorm environment should not only provide for the residential needs of the students, but also provide areas that can be utilized by faculty for classes, office hours, and other student interactions.

In order to attract and maintain the mission appropriate faculty and staff for MSSM, it is important to have housing options available that can be for long term as well as short term visiting educators. While some of this housing should be directly integrated into the school, having nearby options is also important.

Faculty & Staff - policy

Objectives:

Document behavior expectations for faculty and staff engagement in the community

Best Practice Findings:

1. clear and complete Faculty & Staff Handbook
2. faculty and staff development expectations
3. complete position and role descriptions

Considerations

1. clear and complete Faculty & Staff Handbook
2. expand website with new content

Comments:

It is important that the entire faculty and staff have an understanding of what is expected of them beyond the traditional academic roles. In order to ensure this, a best practice is to have a Handbook for the Faculty and Staff that is a resource. Professional development opportunities and other training needs to be identified and offered in order to meet these expectations.

It is also critical that full and detailed position descriptions and role descriptions are developed and maintained. It is recognized that some positions may have multiple roles, so it is important to keep these distinct to accommodate any shifting of roles in the future. A periodic review needs to occur to ensure all required roles are covered.

With updated handbooks, policies, and other documents, access to this information needs to be fast and logical. The website for the school is there to provide all non-confidential information. It is the responsibility of the Faculty and Staff to ensure all web content is accurate and refreshed.

Trustees & Executive Director - people

Objectives:

Optimize Board membership for specific experience, diversity and active engagement

Best Practice Findings:

1. constant search for board talent
2. documented expectations of members
3. strong orientation of new members

Considerations:

1. constant search for board talent
2. documented expectations of members
3. improve orientation of new members
4. review state policy on membership

Comments:

Any effective Board of Trustees benefits from members who are mission appropriate and consistently active in the work of the board.

Finding exceptional members for a Board of Trustees, just as finding exceptional mission appropriate students and attracting exception faculty and staff, requires a concerted effort. Best practices suggest that a Governance Committee that has in its charter an emphasis on Board member recruitment as one of its primary and most important activities is essential to building an effective and mission appropriate Board of Trustees.

At some point, it may be worth an assessment of whether the enabling statute limits the ability of school to achieve the best possible Board of Trustee membership consistent with the school's mission and aspirations.

In the meantime, new board members who are qualified and motivated should be sought out aggressively and candidate's names and qualifications brought to the attention of the Governor's office for consideration. Candidates should be given a written statement of expectations and once appointed should be provided with a well thought out orientation process.

Trustees & Exec. Director – practice

Priority Area for Attention

Objectives:

High level of Board of Trustee focus on Community Health and Student Development

Best Practice Findings:

1. Committee on Student Life
2. regular reporting metrics to Trustees on community health and student development

Considerations:

1. define "Portrait of an MSSM graduate" Recommendation
2. Committee on Community Health and Student Development Recommendation
3. establish monitoring metrics
4. regularly report metrics to Board of Trustees

Comments:

Some top private boarding schools have recognized that their role and opportunity extends well beyond getting their graduates into college. An increasing emphasis on life skills and attitudes has led many schools to put more resources and attention on student development activities that extend well beyond academic and athletic achievements.

Best practices have included the creation of separate departments and staffing to support community health and student development in the areas of life skills. At the Trustee level, this has sometimes included the establishment of a new committee (sometimes called "Committee on Student Life") with responsibility for establishing policies and reporting metrics to monitor progress in this effort.

The definition of the Portrait of an MSSM Graduate would provide an essential focus to the work of such a committee. So, the Ad Hoc Committee on Community Health and Student Development recommends that the Board of Trustees engages in a community wide process to define the Portrait and that it creates a new sub-committee of the Board to oversee the development of practices, facilities and policies to support the effort.

Trustees & Executive Director - place

Objectives: Meeting venues and agendas to optimize Board of Trustees engagement

Best Practice Findings:

1. most regular meetings on campus
2. multiple day meetings include social events

Considerations:

1. poll Trustees on meeting locations
2. consider addition of social events

Comments:

Schedule meeting times that can accommodate most Board members. Meetings are most often held at the school and over several days, involving committee meeting and social activities, all of which help encourage more active member participation.

Poll Trustees at the beginning of each year to establish meeting locations that can maximize attendance.

Objectives:

Establishment of policies and oversight to assure Community Health and Student Development

Best Practice Findings:

1. regular review and re-assessment of policies
2. commitment to reporting and oversight

Considerations

1. review of all policies
2. review committee charters
3. establish reporting metrics

Comments:

One of the most important governance functions of the Board of Trustees is to set policies for the school. Part of this obligation is to ensure that the proper policies are in place, that they are current, and that they are being effectively administered by the Executive Director through the school's Faculty and Staff. Through the Executive Director and the Governance Committee, the policy manual should be reviewed to ensure all policies are current as well as to identify deficiencies or gaps in the current policies.

As identified in this report, a heightened focus on Community Health and Student Development is needed with a recommendation of this report being that a committee focused on this important area be established.

To assure regulatory compliance, comprehensiveness and consistency, the charters for each committee of the Board should be reviewed and updated as necessary.

With any policies, it is important that feedback mechanisms be put in place to help determine the success and impact of certain policies. As part of the Board's governance responsibilities, additional metrics should be developed to help provide information to the board related to key aspects of health, safety, and welfare of the student body.

III. Portrait of a Graduate

The Taft School, Watertown, CT

A Taft education prepares its students in a community devoted to creating lifelong learners, thoughtful citizens, and caring people. More particularly, Taft graduates have exhibited that they:

- Act with honor and integrity, and value both the Taft Honor Code and the school's fundamental conviction that honesty and personal responsibility are the cornerstones of character and of community.
- Serve others unselfishly, reflecting and acting upon the school's motto in both formal and informal contexts: *Non ut sibi ministretur sed ut ministret.*
- Consider a range of perspectives in order to develop a moral worldview that helps create a compassionate, inclusive, and socially just community.
- Respect each individual by authentically, actively, and empathetically engaging with diversity.
- Make informed choices in living healthy and balanced lives.
- Apply the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind of all disciplines to framing questions and solving problems in the pursuit of understanding. Moreover, they see even the most formidable challenges as opportunities for growth.
- Possess intellectual curiosity and resourcefulness, and actively engage in the process of learning.
- Work cooperatively and collaboratively; they are willing to subdue their individual needs and desires in order to contribute to the collective efforts of people united in a common purpose.
- Work and think independently. They are self-reliant, disciplined, and courageous about taking risks in their thinking.
- Express themselves clearly, purposefully, and creatively in their speaking and writing, as well as other forms that they find effective and rewarding.
- Appreciate the arts and have explored their own capacity for creation in all of their endeavors. They apply imagination and inventiveness in the creative process.
- Apply appropriate technologies to the process of learning and understand the possibilities and limitations of various technological innovations.
- Reflect regularly upon their learning and themselves as learners, leading to greater awareness of themselves as individuals and of their places in the world in which they live.

IV. Resources

The Committee met in person five times and held regular conference calls among themselves and with invited community participants. The Committee also decided to engage certain members of the MSSM community to help identify resources to support the research.

Other MSSM Board members contributed to the research effort in important ways. Kate Reilly Delutio interviewed the Executive Director of the Independent School Association of Northern New England, the Associate Head of School for Admissions and Advancement at Foxcroft Academy, the Associate Headmaster for Advancement, Admissions, and Alumni at Thornton Academy, the Executive Director of The Association of Boarding Schools and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Sharon Frost visited the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics and met with the Chancellor's Administrative Assistant, the Director of Advancement and the staff in the Admissions Office. Sharon also had a lengthy telephonic interview with the NCSSM Chancellor.

The Committee met with Laura Butera, Chair of the MSSM Board Program Committee and had telephonic interviews with Executive Director David Pearson, Student Representative to the Board Charlotte McCulloh and Dean of Students Matt Grillo.

David Coit visited the Taft School (Headmaster, Dean of Admissions, Dean of Faculty, Associate Dean of Students) and the St. Paul's School (Dean of Students, Dean of Student Life) and met with a parent of the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (a top ranked public high school in US). David also read Charles Fadel's [Four-Dimensional Education](#), which discusses modern curriculum designed to educate high school students for life.

Marian interviewed UNE staff in the area of Student Life, specifically the Title IX Coordinator and one of the Area Coordinators, a Special Education teacher from the Gorham Schools and a Middle School science teacher from Epping, New Hampshire, who had familiarity with MSSM. Time was spent reviewing information from the websites of Governor's Academy, Magnet Schools of America, the CLASS Coalition and the many policies, resources and standards for Accreditation for both Independent Schools and Public Schools on the NEASC website.

Joel's work was focused mostly around policies, handbooks, websites, and documentation available from a sample of other institutions. These efforts were looking for comparisons between what MSSM had in place to what these other institutions provided. There is an amazing amount of information available from other schools with each having some aspects that would be useful. There is no exact perfect match out there as a comparison, but there are many things each had that could be viewed as a solid reference to learn or build from.

The Committee reviewed several relevant resource publications, including the following:

- Principals of Good Practice, National Association of Independent Schools
- Four-Dimensional Education, by Charles Fadel, Harvard Graduate School of Education
- Guide for Developing High Quality School Emergency Operations Plans, Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Charting a Course for Success: America's Strategy for STEM Education, National Science & Technology Council
- Dollars and Sense: The Cost Effectiveness of Small Schools, The Knowledge Works Foundation
- Maine Statute, Title 20-A, Chapter 312: Maine School of Science and Mathematics
- Navigating the First year – An Onboarding Guide for New Directors, National Association of Corporate Directors
- Student Handbook, The Taft School
- Teacher Handbook, The Taft School
- Portrait of a Graduate, The Taft School
- MSSM: Perceptions of Student, Teachers, Parents and Guidance Counselors, Center for Research and Evaluation, College of Education and Human Development, University of Maine, July 2009
- Maine School Management Association (MSMA) Required Policy List
- North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics Residential Program / Student Life
- Hebron Academy Residential Life
- Mission, Stanford University College of Engineering
- Curriculum Statement, Olin College of Engineering

- Undergraduate Practice Opportunities Program, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Mission and Beliefs, Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy
- Mission, North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) – both the Independent School and Public-School accreditation resources and standards

End of report
