NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE

Ansonia High School

Ansonia, Connecticut

October 25 – 28, 2015

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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 of Ansonia High School 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 Ansonia High School in terms of the Committee'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.

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INTRODUCTION

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

The governing body of the Association is its Board of Trustees which supervises the work of 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 Commission on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI), and the Commission 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 committees to assess the degree to which the evaluated schools meet the qualitative Standards for Accreditation of the Committee. Those Standards are:

> Teaching and Learning Standards
> > Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations
> > Curriculum
> > Instruction
> > Assessment of and for Student Learning
>
> Support of Teaching and Learning Standards
> > School Culture and Leadership
> > School Resources for Learning
> > Community Resources for Learning.

The accreditation program for public schools involves a threefold process: the self-study conducted by the local professional staff, the on-site evaluation conducted by the Committee's visiting committee, and the follow-up program carried out by the school to implement the findings of its own self-study and the valid recommendations of the visiting committee and those identified by the 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 Ansonia High School, a committee of fifteen members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities and facilities available for young people. In addition to faculty members, the self-study committees included student and parent participation.

The self-study of Ansonia High School extended over a period of twenty school months from November 2013 to October 2015. The visiting committee was pleased to note that students, parents, and community members joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

Public schools evaluated by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their adherence to the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the school's mission, learning expectations, and unique student population. In addition to using the Self-Study Guides developed by a representative group of New England educators and approved by the Committee, Ansonia 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 Committee

A visiting committee of sixteen evaluators was assigned by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Ansonia High School. The Committee members spent four days in Ansonia, Connecticut, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students and parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school meets the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented public schools and central office administrators, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Ansonia High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials

- 34 hours shadowing 16 students for a half day

- a total of 16 hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)

- numerous informal observations in and around the school

- tours of the facility

- individual meetings with 32 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning

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

- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

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

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

Ansonia High School
School and Community Summary

Ansonia High School is located in the hilltop section of the City of Ansonia. The city is one of the seven communities that form the region known as the Naugatuck River Valley, or more commonly known as "the Valley." It is centrally located in the middle of some of the state's largest cities: Bridgeport to the south, New Haven to the southeast, and Waterbury to the north. The city of 6.2 square miles has a diverse population just over 19,200. Historically a factory mill town, Ansonia faces many of the same challenges that other older mill towns face. The city has limited potential for development and job creation due to its limited size and available space. The majority of Ansonia residents are employed in services, trade, and manufacturing industries. The median household income is $62,522 and 9.7percent of the population is living below the poverty line. The unemployment rate is slightly higher than the state at 10.2%. As a reflection of this, 59.5 percent of high school students receive free or reduced lunch.

The Ansonia School District is ranked 162 out of 166 districts in Connecticut in terms of per pupil expenditure. The 2013 per pupil expenditure is $11,785.67 compared to the state average of $14,961.08. Education accounts for 45.8 percent of the city's total budget.

Ansonia is home to six public and independent schools. There are two public elementary schools, Mead and Prendergast, both serving grades K-6. Ansonia Middle School is a public school serving grades pre-K and 7-8, and Ansonia High School the public high school serving grades 9-12. In addition there is Assumption School, a private catholic school serving grades pk3 – 8, and Emmett O'Brien Vocational Technical School, a state run technical high school for students in grades 9-12. The total enrollment for Ansonia Public Schools is 2,322. It is a very diverse district both economically and ethnically; 46% of students in the district are white, 19

percent black, 30 percent Hispanic, and 1 percent or less Asian, American Indian, Native Hawaiian, or two or more races.

Ansonia High School has 605 students enrolled for the 2013-2014 school year, a significant decrease from 2010 when 754 students were enrolled. This includes students enrolled in PACE, an alternative education program housed at the high school. The daily attendance rate for students was 92.4 percent as of 2013. There are 65 professional staff members who had an average daily attendance rate of 90 percent as of 2013. Teachers teach an average of five classes with an average student load of 115.

Beginning in 2013, all freshmen were placed on one of two teams in a Freshman Academy. The teams consist of four teachers, one for each core academic area, English, mathematics, social studies, and science. All of these courses are unleveled except mathematics, which has an honors section. Students in grades 10-12 may select from three levels of core academic courses, college preparatory, honors, or Advanced Placement/ECE where offered. All students are required to take four credits in English, three credits in social studies, including U.S. History and Civics, three credits in mathematics, and two credits in science. They must also earn one credit in Career and Technical Education or art, one credit in physical education, one half credit in health, and one half credit in computer applications. The remainder of a student's schedule is comprised of elective courses to meet a minimum graduation requirement of 22 credits over the course of four years. Students also have numerous opportunities to participate in co-curricular and extracurricular activities such as FBLA, Student Government, Cooperative International Studies, art/music competitions and athletic teams.

Ansonia has several academic partnerships with a local college and university in which students can earn college credit in high school. The first is the Early College Enrollment (ECE) program

with UCONN, which allows students to take college courses at the high school and to earn high school as well as college credit. We offer four courses eligible for ECE credit. The second partnership is with Housatonic Community College. Juniors and seniors can enroll in eight specified high school courses and earn dual credit for high school and college upon completing the requirements through the College Career Pathway Program. In addition, students have the opportunity to earn college credit through the Advanced Placement (AP) Testing Program through the College Board. Ansonia High School offers 11 AP courses. Additionally, students enrolled in a planned sequence of courses in culinary and engineering have the opportunity to receive college credit at affiliated universities.

The average graduation rate over the past two years is 96.6 percent. In 2013, 36 percentof graduating seniors enrolled in a four-year college, 24 percent in a two-year college, 8 percent enrolled in a technical college, and 30 percent directly entered the military or workforce.

A partnership with Sikorsky Credit Union was formed in 2013 to develop a school-based bank. The purpose of this partnership is to emphasize the importance of financial literacy and provide work based learning opportunities for students. Several local businesses also serve on the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Advisory Board to assist CTE teachers in the development of curriculum, future programs, and skills that students will need to be successful in the workforce. In addition, Ansonia High School has formed a School Governance Council. The intent of the council is to enable staff, parents, students, and community leaders to work together to improve student achievement. The council serves in an advisory capacity to assist the school's administration in moving the school forward.

Students at Ansonia High School are recognized for their accomplishments through a Superintendent's award, Board of Education recognition, and an end of the year Award

Ceremony. Throughout the year students are also recognized through several ceremonies such as the AP/HCC Celebration, National Honor Society and Spanish Honor Society Induction Ceremonies, and sports banquets. Beginning in the fall of 2012, AHS implemented the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support program (PBIS). Teachers have the opportunity to recognize students exhibiting positive conduct with a Charger Pride Award at the end of each marking period through the PBIS program.

Ansonia High School

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

The mission of AHS is to prepare all students to reach their potential by teaching them the knowledge, skills and behaviors necessary for academic, social and civic success. Students will be prepared for life in the ever changing technological world of the 21st century by meeting high expectations, engaging in authentic problem solving, and utilizing critical thinking.

Academic Expectations

- Apply critical thinking skills to solve problems
- Access, evaluate, apply, and communicate information and ideas through writing, speaking, and effective use of technology.
- Read effectively for a variety of purposes.
- Work independently, reflectively, and/or collaboratively to accomplish goals.

Civic Expectation

- Demonstrate service to the school and community

Social Expectation

- Demonstrate respect for self, others and property within our school community.

COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

TEACHING AND LEARNING
STANDARDS

_____

CORE VALUES, BELIEFS, AND LEARNING

EXPECTATIONS

_____

CURRICULUM

_____

INSTRUCTION

_____

ASSESSMENT OF AND FOR STUDENT

LEARNING

_____

Teaching and Learning Standard

1 Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

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 best 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, and are defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify 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.

Teaching and Learning Standard

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

The school community engaged 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. The process of developing a core values and beliefs statement began in May 2010. It included high school administrators, teachers, students, and parents. During multiple faculty and department meetings, the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations were written, revised, and approved by the high school principal and faculty. Round table focus groups were held with students to gain their input, and rough drafts were sent to the Parent Teacher Student Organization for their review and input. On March 24, 2011, the faculty voted to accept the core values and beliefs statement. In January 2012, the School Governance Council, which includes parents and students, reviewed and provided feedback on the core values and beliefs and school-wide rubrics. On March 7, 2012, the board of education approved the core values, beliefs, learning expectations, and school-wide rubrics. After final revisions, administrators and staff voted to accept the revised core values and beliefs statement. The committee incorporated research including, but not limited to, Dr. Robert Marzano, Dr. Carol Tomlinson, and Dr. Benjamin Bloom in order to create the 21st century learning expectations. A plan was established to revisit and review the core values statement every two years. It was last voted on in June 2014 and approved with no revisions necessary at that time. Students, faculty, and parents can identify the school's core values and beliefs. The core values and beliefs are displayed in hallways and classrooms throughout the building. They are posted on the school website. The acronym

iPRIDE was adopted for learning expectations. iPRIDE posters are displayed throughout the school. The core values, beliefs, and learning expectations document highlights the mission statement and clearly delineates academic, civic, and social learning expectations. A majority of parents feel that the core values and beliefs represent what the community values about student learning. Because the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations were developed and approved by board of education, teachers, administrators, community members, parents, and students, there is great potential that all stakeholders will be committed to the core values and beliefs about learning at Ansonia High School. (teachers, students, self-study, parents)

The school has challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies, and are defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted high levels of achievement; however, the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations document is not clear on its values. The core values, beliefs, and learning expectations document provides a clear list of challenging academic, civic, and social expectations; however, there is no clear explanation of the school's concrete core values. The learning expectations prepare students for the remainder of the 21st century. The learning expectations are consistent with the school's beliefs. There are eight analytic rubrics that cover all academic, civic, and social expectations to prepare for the 21st century, including critical thinking and problem solving, oral presentation, reading for understanding, writing, technology, work (independently, reflectively, collaboratively), civic, and social. The rubrics use language such as "meets standard" to indicate the desired level of achievement that the school expects students to attain. Each rubric uses common language for levels of achievement, including exceeds standard, meets standard, approaching standard, and below standard. The rubrics are

also clearly labeled with what learning expectation is being assessed; however, teachers and parents report that parents are unclear what the rubric score, in regards to a student's progress toward 21st century learning expectations, means on the report card. The lesson plan templates identify the academic, civic, and social expectations. The rubrics were piloted in 2011, and final revisions were made in January 2012. Each department is assigned one of the rubrics that they are responsible for reporting individual student progress. Teachers use the rubrics to monitor progress at least twice a marking period and report students' level of proficiency once per marking period's report card. When the school develops more clarity on their school core values, the learning expectations will better align to their core values and beliefs statement. (self-study, teachers, administrators, students, parents)

The school's beliefs and 21st century learning expectations are reflected in the culture of the school, have begun to drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in a majority of classrooms, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations; however, since there are no clearly expressed core values their impact is yet to be applied and determined. According to the Endicott survey, the majority of staff, parents, and students agree that the learning expectations are clear. The advisory program and related activities were established in 2012 to meet academic, civic, and social expectations of all students to ensure they actively reflect the culture of the school. Activities include community service projects, Naviance research to support the Student Success Plan, and specific lessons to familiarize students with the beliefs and learning expectations. Lesson plan templates that teachers use identify learning expectations for the lesson. Teachers are required to use at least one rubric twice per marking period to assess students. Individual departments regularly review and revise school-wide rubrics

to ensure compliance with Common Core State Standards. Programs such as Freshman Academy and PACE include activities that help promote understanding and development of the learning expectations. For example, an iPRIDE scavenger hunt is held for Freshman Academy students in the two weeks prior to the start of the school year; additionally, PACE offers students an alternative program to be successful in achieving 21st century learning expectations. The Warrior program is offered to help improve school culture. Academic expectations are frequently assessed. Adherence to the social expectation is evidenced through student behavior and their pride in the building. The addition of new classes and bi-monthly early release days for professional development support the implementation of the beliefs and learning expectations. When the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations are guided by the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, then the culture, curriculum, instruction, and assessment will further support student achievement. (Endicott survey, self-study, teachers, students, school support staff, parents)

The school regularly 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. In 2012, a review plan was set up. The core values, beliefs, and learning expectations are revisited every two years by faculty. The core values, beliefs, and learning expectations were last voted on in June 2014, with no revisions made. The next review will take place in March 2016. The process will include looking at new research on best practices, multiple data sources such as data on school-wide rubrics and data collected at district and school-wide data team meetings, and district and school community priorities. The review process in March 2016 will include teachers, parents, students, and the board of education. As a

result of the formal process of continual review and revision of the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, the document is ever-changing to ensure it meets the students' needs and expectations for the 21st century. (self-study, teachers, administrators)

Teaching and Learning Standard

1   Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Commendations:

1. The leadership provided by the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations committee in the development of a collaborative process to establish a set of core values and beliefs about learning

2. The involvement of all levels of stakeholders in an inclusive process to identify their beliefs about learning 21st century learning expectations

3. The use of 21st century research to guide the development of learning expectations

4. The display of core values, beliefs, and learning expectations throughout the building

5. The clear learning expectations

6. The commitment to a continual review and revision plan

Recommendations:

1. Identify and clarify the core values of the school in the Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations document

2. Develop and implement a process to ensure the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations

3. Develop and implement a process to ensure the review process for the school's

    core values, beliefs, and learning expectations is based on research, multiple

    data sources, as well as school and district priorities

Teaching and Learning Standard

2   Curriculum

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 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.

Teaching and Learning Standard

2 Curriculum

The curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning academic expectations, but the social and civic expectations are not integrated or measured. The curriculum is continuously updated and revised to better align with the Common Core Standards and to more clearly articulate how all students will achieve 21st century learning expectations. The academic school-wide rubrics are used to evaluate learning in all curricular areas; these rubrics were purposefully created using 21st century learning expectations and Common Core State Standards. Teachers use these rubrics to assess student progress on the school's academic expectations and report this information to parents. Student progress of the social and civic expectations is not reported to parents as the rubrics for these expectations are not being regularly used in classes. Parents mention that their students' current event assignments, linked to a curricular unit of study, prompt discussions and critical thinking outside of the school environment. Teachers report using technology, problem solving, and real-world applications on a regular basis in their classes and participate in a school-wide push to incorporate technology more in their units. Learning expectations for units were revised in order to align with Common Core 21st century learning expectations and are regularly reviewed. Teachers use the rubrics for the school-wide 21st century learning expectations. Students are asked to self-assess prior to teacher assessment using the rubrics which focus on 21st century learning expectations. When the school fully utilizes its 21st century learning expectations, including the social and civic learning expectations and rubrics, the curriculum will be purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve the school's 21st century

learning expectations. (self-study, parents, teachers, students, classroom observations, school leadership team)

Some of the curriculum is written in a common format template 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 school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics. As of 2014-2015, the school offers 103 courses. Of the courses offered, sixty courses have curriculum that are completed and approved; however, 43 courses are missing a written curriculum or are not written in a common format. All curricula except ELA courses are written using a common template, and there are plans for ELA to adopt this common template in the near future. The curriculum template asks for Common Core and Connecticut State priority standards; units of study with essential questions, unwrapped concepts and skills; unwrapped priority standards; priority vocabulary; school-wide expectations; unit's "big idea"; an engaging scenario; recommended learning activities; supports and strategies for differentiation; and instructional resources and materials. It also includes recommended effective teaching strategies and Bloom's taxonomy of higher order thinking. The curriculum format does not specifically include technology usage or instruction, which contradicts one of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Weekly lesson plans are submitted to administrators using a common format. Classroom visits demonstrate that the essential questions from the curriculum are presented to students daily. Classroom teachers post academic expectations for student learning. In examining student work, it is clear that assessments are graded with the school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics. When all course curricula are written using a common curriculum template and include purposeful use of technology, the curriculum will ensure

opportunities for students to meet the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, teachers, curriculum unit template, classroom observations, student work, school leadership team)

The curriculum to varying degrees emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem solving, higher order thinking, cross-disciplinary learning, authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school, and informed and ethical use of technology. Endicott survey results indicate 91.2 percent of teachers agree curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge. Seventy-eight percent of parents feel their children are developing problem-solving and higher order thinking skills. While 89.4 percent of staff feel their subject area emphasizes these skills, only 70.2 percent of students feel their courses challenge them to think critically. Parents and students are pleased that more AP courses, which they feel require higher order thinking skills, are offered and are open to all interested students. Some students and teachers feel the curriculum is challenging and fast paced, but does not always explore topics with enough depth.

There is limited formal cross-disciplinary learning. The Interdisciplinary Art course taken in conjunction with Interdisciplinary World Cultures is the one purposefully designed cross-disciplinary offering. Cross-disciplinary learning occurs most prevalently in the Freshman Academy, where teachers share common planning time. While there are other examples of cross-disciplinary projects, both students and teachers report a lack of cross-disciplinary opportunities in the curriculum.

While the faculty and school leadership report that there are numerous authentic learning opportunities that allow students to apply their knowledge and skills both in and outside of class, only 41.2 percent of students feel they are provided with opportunities for learning off campus. The results of the Endicott survey indicate that 77.2 percent of staff and 71.5 percent of parents feel the curriculum provides students with authentic application of what they are learning, yet only 57.8 percent of students feel that teachers explain how to apply what they are learning to experiences in other courses and outside of school. Parents mention the business program's partnership with Texas Roadhouse along with other local businesses to practice authentic learning outside of the school walls and to look at the business component of the restaurant. Faculty cited examples of authentic learning including planning a restaurant from the bottom up, travel abroad, music performances off campus, field trips, and guest speakers. Students note authentic learning opportunities in projects in some math classes, internship at the school-based Sikorsky Federal Credit Union, and participation in regional music groups.

The school emphasizes informed and ethical use of technology and uses a school-wide technology rubric and school technology agreement to assess and support this. The curriculum minimally supports this effort as the curriculum template does not include a technology component. The Endicott survey results show 70.7 percent of parents feel that their children are learning about the ethical use of technology. Students (76.2 percent) and faculty (79.7 percent) agree. Teachers use technology in delivering lessons through use of Internet, electronic presentations, and interactive whiteboards. Some teachers use web-based class sites like Google Classroom to post and collect student work. Teachers also communicate with parents and students through class websites and other apps and Web 2.0 tools, such as Remind. Upper level

science classes acquire and analyze data using Vernier probes and advanced analysis software including LabPro and Excel. Many math classes use graphing calculators. The school subscribes to programs such as Turnitin, EasyBib, Destiny, and Naviance. Students use word processing and presentation software in a number of classes, with many students using cloud-based collaborative versions, like Google Docs and slides. A semester long computer course is a graduation requirement for all students. When the written curriculum includes cross-disciplinary learning, clear and relevant authentic learning opportunities in and outside of school, and the use of technology, it will fully emphasize a depth of understanding and application of knowledge. (Endicott survey, school leadership team, teachers, students, parents, self-study, student shadowing, facility tour)

There is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum. The Endicott survey shows 77.2 percent of teachers believe that the taught and written curricula are aligned. Teachers provide students with rubrics when assigning projects, have them use the rubrics for self-assessment, and then assess the students' work using the rubric. Teachers submit weekly lesson plans to their assigned administrator, who ensures the plans align with the written curriculum. Master teachers perform non-evaluative observations ensuring the alignment of taught and written curriculum. In addition, biweekly data teams are used to analyze student scores on assessments ensuring the taught curriculum is aligned with the written curriculum. These assessments include common formative assessments, which are used in most courses, and common midterm and final assessments which are used by all courses. In addition some courses require students to maintain a portfolio which offers additional evidence to support the alignment of taught and written curriculum. As a result of the school's formal and informal processes of

reflection on teaching and learning, the taught curriculum is aligned with the written curriculum. (Endicott survey, students, teachers, school leadership team, curriculum committee)

Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist among most academic areas and with sending schools in the district, and some curricular coordination exists between academic areas within the school. Middle school teachers prepare students for high school, giving additional support when needed, and Freshman Academy teachers build on those skills. Freshman Academy teachers hold teacher meetings every other day to help coordinate curriculum across subject areas. Students feel that previous years' courses prepared them well for each subsequent course. With the exception of Freshman Academy, teachers have little opportunity for cross-disciplinary planning, although some teachers plan informally. The 2014-2015 ELA curriculum committee minutes demonstrate meetings occurred once a month with ELA members from sending schools to ensure coordination and vertical articulation among all academic levels. Six curriculum teams with representatives from the elementary, middle, and high schools, meet monthly for an entire school day to analyze data and to write vertically aligned curriculum. The district has held multiple curriculum writing workshops during which teachers have worked in departments to review and revise curriculum. Close reading training has facilitated the curricular coordination and vertical articulation of critical reading among all academic areas. When the school regularly engages in effective cross-curricular coordination among all academic areas within the school, curriculum in all academic areas will ensure continuity of learning for every student. (students, teachers, meeting minutes, ELA curriculum committee, self-study)

With a few exceptions the staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to implement the curriculum, including co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities. Due to changes in curriculum, English classes have been provided with new books through a grant that allows alignment with the Common Core to implement the curriculum properly. Parents are pleased with the availability of technological resources their children have in order to complete rigorous curriculum activities: five computer labs, seven Chromebook carts, and supplies are always present. Parents mention that there are sufficient learning opportunities outside of the classroom that aid in implementing the curriculum; the business program partners with Texas Roadhouse, along with other local businesses, to practice authentic learning outside of the school. The Endicott survey shows 98.2 percent of staff agrees the media center is an excellent resource for instruction and technology. The Endicott survey shows 82 percent of staff, 88 percent of parents, and 67 percent of students feel the school facility is adequately supporting its programs and services. Students report the media center provides excellent resources, including printing capability for students who do not have a printer at home. Students report that technology is provided, but they believe students need to take more advantage of the resources present. Students mentioned sometimes it is hard to access Chromebooks when needed for an activity tied to curriculum. They noted that their Spanish class does not have a full set of textbooks, but they have access to an etextbook when needed for curricular activities. Students mention Google Classroom is used as well as Edmodo to share documents for lessons as a means to implement curriculum pieces. Some math classes do not have enough books to take home for every student, but there are enough for a classroom set to be accessed in a class. The curriculum committee reports the need for scientific and graphing calculators. One math teacher's room is too small for his classes so he teaches in the lecture hall.

Science labs and art facilities are "great" and well equipped with instruments and supplies to implement curriculum-supported labs, but are not readily available to all classes. The self-study notes that the library media specialist is an asset to the teachers for implementing the curriculum; however, she currently has fewer opportunities to work with classes in the library/ media center or in classrooms due to other school needs. The self-study notes that co-curricular program and other learning opportunities to fully implement the curriculum are sufficiently supported except for two co-curricular activities which require fees: DECA and FBLA. When staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library media center are sufficiently implemented across all classrooms and academic areas of the building, students will benefit from improved learning opportunities. (students, parents, Endicott survey, students, curriculum committee, self-study)

The district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research, but teachers need time specifically allocated to this process. The Endicott survey indicates that while 79 percent of staff feels they are directly involved in curriculum evaluation, review, and revision, only 47.4 percent of staff feels they have sufficient time to engage in this work. The Freshman Academy teachers are provided with a common planning period every other day that can be used for curriculum review and revision. Time for curriculum planning across disciplines for other teachers is not scheduled. The leadership team and teachers both commented that all requests for release time for curriculum development have been granted. The board has regular curriculum committee meetings, and all written curriculum is board approved prior to implementation. The board works with the central office grant writer to find

financial support for the development and implementation of new courses. Using funding provided by an Alliance Grant, the district provided curriculum writing conferences for the past two summers. Prior to the grant the district funded summer curriculum conferences. The district has also funded release time for curriculum development and revision during the academic year. CFA, CAPT, SBAC, NWEA, PSAT, and SAT data are all used to evaluate and revise curriculum. Six curriculum work groups, under the leadership of the two district curriculum coordinators, meet monthly to analyze data and revise curriculum for each academic discipline. Curriculum coordinators and the three master teachers work with teachers to ensure curricula are aligned with Common Core. Sixty of the 103 courses have a completed and board-approved curriculum, with fifteen additional courses in the process of being written and approved. The advisory program curriculum has been completed for the freshman and sophomore programs, but work on the junior and senior programs has not occurred due to lack of funding. The plan is for the advisory program to culminate in a senior capstone, a state mandate beginning with the class of 2020. When the district provides dedicated curriculum planning time, teachers will be fully able to use assessment results and current research for collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum in order to provide the best learning opportunities for students. (school leadership team, self-study, Endicott survey, teachers, school board)

Teaching and Learning Standard

2 **Curriculum**

Commendations:

1. The commitment to the process of curriculum development

2. The school's commitment to revise curriculum to ensure alignment with 21st century academic learning expectations

3. The widespread use of the curriculum template

4. The adoption of a common format for weekly lesson plans

5. The school's commitment to use data to ensure the alignment of the taught and written curriculum

6. The district's commitment to K-12 curriculum development via curriculum coordinators and committees

7. The Freshman Academy's work to coordinate curriculum across academic areas

8. The commitment of the school to keep technology accessible to students

Recommendations:

1. Integrate the school's civic and social learning expectations into the curriculum

2. Complete all curriculum using the school's established common format

3. Articulate the connection between content and students' lives in and outside of school

4. Provide regular opportunities for cross-curricular coordination for all academic areas within the school

5. Provide dedicated time to address ongoing curriculum development, review and revision

6. Provide sufficient instructional materials to implement the curriculum across all classrooms and academic areas of the building

Teaching and Learning Standard

▣ Instruction

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.

Teaching and Learning Standard

3   Instruction

Teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. Teachers have clearly posted the school core values and beliefs about learning in their classrooms and reference specific beliefs on lesson plans written on a common school lesson plan template. The Endicott survey indicates that 86 percent of faculty members agree that instructional practices are continuously examined in line with the goal of ensuring consistency with the school's core values and beliefs. The school maintains three master teachers who understand both local instructional practices and new state initiatives and who provide "just in time" training, or ad hoc professional development, when needed, to ensure implementation of new state initiatives. Teaching practices in all classes consistently support the school's core values and beliefs about learning through the use of eight school-wide rubrics. While all eight rubrics are not utilized in every class, every class uses appropriate rubrics. These evaluations can be seen on student report cards for each marking term via a teacher comment. Specifically, the English department has to use the reading rubric twice per quarter. Similarly, each of the other departments is required to use one or more of the school-wide rubrics a specific number of times per quarter in the assessment of their students. Some teachers use school-wide rubrics as an instructional tool to model exemplary work before the students engage in a graded activity. Also, teachers consistently use the PBIS model with their students to provide positive reinforcement for exemplary behavior pursuant to the social expectation of the school's core values and beliefs. Teachers are engaged in reflective practices via their yearly formal evaluation and through end-of-year student evaluations of their courses. Some teachers use end-of-week student reflections

to generate feedback for reflective practices. On reflection, departments may recommend changes to school-wide rubrics. These recommendations are brought before the faculty for discussion. All faculty members meet in data teams by department several times per month to discuss student progress and to determine which instructional strategies should be implemented to increase student achievement. As a result of teachers' continuous examination of instructional practices and their consistent alignment of instructional practices with the school's core values and beliefs, students receive an education built around a common vision that is in harmony with 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, classroom observations, teacher interviews, LASW)

Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by personalizing instruction; 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; and integrating technology; however, there is limited opportunity for cross-disciplinary learning. Teachers can request help from the master teachers and "just in time" training when they need help with the implementation of instructional strategies. Some teacher practices include differentiated strategies for which choice of topic is based on student interest. According to the Endicott survey, 42.4 percent of the 500 students surveyed report their teachers give them opportunities to choose topics for some of their assignments. Grade 9 students research a topic of choice based on personal interest for the capstone project. Grade 10 students choose a community service project based on their interest. Students in Career and Technical Education develop a Life After High School plan based on what they project will happen after graduation. Limited cross-disciplinary

learning opportunities are evident. World Cultures and Art provide a cross-disciplinary course. Other instances of cross-disciplinary learning occur informally on a teacher-to-teacher basis. Students have read *The Life of Henrietta Lacks* in English class while studying genetics in biology. Students in algebra have learned about variables while studying experimental variables in science class. Students often work independently or collaboratively with classmates on projects and discovery lessons. Four of the six examples of student work required group work on projects. In many of their science classes, student groups conduct laboratory investigations. Activities are designed by the teacher to achieve a particular aim. The history curriculum emphasizes inquiry-based essays aligned to learning targets. In math, students analyze the financial impact of owning their dream car. In a Business of Sports and Entertainment class, students worked in groups to discuss why the entertainment industry uses social media for marketing campaigns. Many teachers ask students to apply knowledge and skills to authentic tasks. Students in math compare the cost of cellphone plans. In science, students research the design and makeup of a product used in everyday life. Students in engineering classes develop products to solve real-world problems. Some business students have the opportunity to intern at Sikorsky Financial Credit Union, a business that has established a presence in the school. According to the Endicott survey, 56.8 percent of the 500 students surveyed report they have opportunities to apply their learning outside of the classroom. Students are asked to reflect and critique their own work. Students report that teachers use school-wide rubrics in all of their classes. Each student creates a portfolio in which they document their learning year-to-year. Weekly, students in one math class submit a self-reflection on their progress in the class. One teacher reported students develop a "keys for success plan" in her class for which they identify work study practices they will strengthen in an effort to improve their academic success. Many

teachers support their instruction with technology. Many classrooms have SMARTBoards or Promethean Boards with which teachers enhance the delivery of their lessons. Teachers were observed using SMARTBoards to post the day's agenda and class notes. Teachers have access to mobile laptop labs. Science teachers have access to probes and other scientific instrumentation. Some teachers have teacher channels or class pages on which they post class agendas and assignments. According to the Endicott survey, 56.8 percent of 500 students surveyed report their teachers ask them to use technology in their assignments. When more formal opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning are implemented, teachers' instructional practices will support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. (classroom observations, self-study, student work)

Teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by using formative assessments, purposefully organizing group learning activities, and providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom, however strategic differentiation is inconsistent. Teachers regularly assess each student's learning formally and informally throughout a lesson using a variety of assessment strategies. These strategies include, but are not limited to, pre-reading activities, writing prompts, verbal questioning, graphic organizers, group work, and written activities. Teachers were observed informing students that in-class formative assessments were intended for skill improvement and not as a formal grade. While some teachers regularly provide specific written feedback to students on graded assignments, improvement could be made in this area. Methods of differentiation used by some teachers include, but are not limited to, visual and multi-sensory instruction, scaffolding, spiraling, and providing master copies of notes. Examination of student work and classroom observations indicates a need for

wider use of differentiation strategies. The PACE program provides instruction to students who are transitioning back to a mainstream school environment or who benefit from more individualized attention. Teachers meet several times each month in data teams by department to discuss how formative assessment data can be used to devise and employ instructional strategies designed specifically to help individual students. Most teachers across all departments purposefully organize group learning activities to encourage student collaboration. Behavioral and classroom management issues prevent this from being an effective instructional strategy for some teachers resulting in more teacher-directed activities. Teachers and students agree that extra-help sessions are consistently available across all academic departments. The Endicott survey indicates that 86 percent of parents agree that teachers provide additional support for their children when needed. When teachers consistently adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of all students, students will better achieve 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, classroom observations, teacher interviews, students, parents, Endicott survey)

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, examining current research, and engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice. Teachers have regular, formal time to meet to review assessment data. All teachers meet several times a month in data teams by department to review assessment data with the purpose of informing and improving instructional practices. The Endicott survey shows that 93 percent of teachers improve their instructional practices by using achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments. These include, but are not limited to, common assessments, mid-year and final exams, NWEA

analysis, and instructional data team information. Data teams within content areas look at and discuss student work in addition to examining assessment data and discussing instructional practices. Teachers use feedback from a variety of sources to make decisions regarding their instructional practices. Student performance data from NWEA, Smarter Balance (SBAC), common formative assessments, end-of-course student surveys, and school-wide rubrics are gathered and analyzed throughout the year to inform instruction. Teachers meet two times a month to examine student data and to make instructional recommendations. Department time and professional development time is often allotted for "just in time" training. Teachers have opportunities to examine current research and to engage in professional discourse on best practices related to instruction. Master teachers provide training on key pedagogical practices as well as on federal, state, and local initiatives. Master teachers collaborate with an executive coach on relevant issues. Teachers can request "just in time" training from the master teachers to address instructional concerns. Time is found during the school day to provide training and support. Because teachers engage in a comprehensive review of instructional practice, all students benefit from improved instruction and research-based best practices. (self-study, student shadowing, teacher interviews, classroom observations)

Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices. Teachers read and reflect on content-specific literature designed to help improve instruction specific to their subject area in response to "just in time" training provided by master teachers assigned to oversee their content area. Teachers regularly reflect on their conversations with colleagues several times a month after meeting by department in data teams. Teachers reflect on feedback from administrators in response to their

yearly evaluation, a SEED model based on Marshall's "Evaluation Rubrics." Teachers have their students complete an end-of-course evaluation and reflect on this feedback as it relates to the instruction provided to students over the past year. Some, but not all, teachers provide exit surveys or end-of-week student-written evaluations of the instruction given that week. These teachers reflect on and adjust instruction in response to this weekly student feedback. The teachers' contract states that teachers are provided with the benefit of being reimbursed for up to six credits of graduate level coursework per contract year. Teachers use this benefit to expand professional training and knowledge in both their subject area and in the educational leadership content area. As a result of teachers being adult learners and reflective practitioners, teachers maintain expertise in their respective content areas for the benefit of the learning of all students. (self-study, teacher contract, teacher interviews)

Teaching and Learning Standard

3   Instruction

Commendations:

1. The data teams that analyze student performance

2. The consistent use of school-wide rubrics in all classes

3. The professional support provided by the master teachers

4. The regular extra-help sessions provided by many teachers

5. The PACE program

6. The systematic approach to timely and pertinent professional development

7. The availability of technology to enhance instruction

Recommendations:

1. Increase opportunities for student reflection on instructional practices throughout each course

2. Create formal opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning

3. Provide more differentiated instruction opportunities for students

4. Increase the use of technology to enhance the delivery of instruction

Teaching and Learning Standard

4   Assessment of and for Student Learning

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, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

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 the corresponding rubrics.

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.

Teaching and Learning Standard

4   **Assessment of and for Student Learning**

The professional staff continuously employs a formal process, based on school-wide rubrics to assess individual, but not whole-school, progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. Professional staff meet regularly in data teams and department meetings to formally collaborate on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments; however, whole-school data is not analyzed. Department meetings are held once a month. Early release time is provided every other week for data team meetings. At these meetings, teachers discuss assessment practices, student work, and make adjustments to curriculum and instructional processes. Each department takes responsibility for using the same school-wide rubric twice per marking period. These rubrics are reading for understanding, writing, technology, critical thinking and problem solving, oral presentation, and work (independently, reflectively, collaboratively). The school-wide civic and social rubrics are not assigned to specific departments. The civic rubric is used during advisory period. Master teachers reported that there have been discussions about using the school-wide social rubric during the daily freshman seminar period. Teachers and departments also use course-specific rubrics. Many students reported that their teachers use school-wide rubrics prior to summative assessments. When the staff commits to using all school-wide rubrics to assess student work on a regular basis, students will understand how to meet all the school's 21st century learning expectations. (teacher interviews, student work, students, self-study, master teachers)

The school's professional staff communicates individual student progress in achieving some of the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families; however, reporting of the whole school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community is limited. School-wide rubrics are available on the school's website. Parents are encouraged to pick up first quarter report cards in person and conference with teachers. Quarterly report cards include course grades. Quarterly report cards include information on whether students exceed, meet, are approaching, or are below standards assessed by the academic school-wide rubrics. The Tyler Education Management System (TEMS) web-based portal provides continuous access to student grades, attendance, and comments. Teachers formally notify students in danger of failing midway through each of the four marking periods. Warning notices for students in danger of failing are sent home via students. Some teachers provide individual progress reports for their students during the marking period. Parents and students report that teachers and guidance counselors are accessible and responsive to inquiries about student progress via telephone and email. In interviews, some parents indicated a desire to have school-wide rubrics made available with report cards. Data from state assessments (SBAC, CAPT) other standardized tests (NWEA), and district common formative assessments are reported to the board of education. That data has been used, in part, to support funding requests for new textbooks. In the winter of 2015, the principal and master teachers held an open forum for students, parents, and the community on NWEA testing, how to read NWEA results, overall student achievement concerns, and how teachers plan to use data to inform instruction. The "Student Achievement" tab of the school's website recognizes students for various accomplishments including students of the month, National Honor Society members, and more. Honor roll student names are on the television in the school's lobby. Master teachers reported

that there have been discussions about ways to share whole-school progress with the community. When the school's professional staff communicates both individual and whole-school progress toward 21st century learning expectations, students, parents, and the community will have a complete and accurate picture of student progress. (parents, report cards, AHS Student Handbook, teacher interviews, self-study)

The professional staff is formally collecting, disaggregating, and analyzing data to identify student achievement and is in the process of responding to inequities. On the Endicott survey, 96 pecent of staff agrees that the staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities. Twice a month lead teachers chair departmental data team meetings focused on reviewing pre- and post-common formative assessments, standardized test results such as the NWEA reading, writing and math results, RAPS 360 reading diagnostic, Star Math, CAPT and departmental diagnostic results in science, and other common course specific assessments such as projects, labs, and midterm and final exams. Monthly department meetings are also used to analyze assessment results. These reviews form the basis of SMART goals which lead to adjustments in instructional practices. For example, Spanish teachers brainstormed the use of role-plays as a strategy to address students' limitations in using vocabulary appropriately. Departmental pre-assessments led science teachers to focus on reading for information strategies. Common formative assessments in social studies classes focused teachers on summarizing as an instructional strategy to address students' deficiencies in identifying main ideas. The English department utilizes common summative assessments such as the midterm and final exam item analysis to identify skill deficiencies and to discuss instructional strategies to improve student learning. Other responses to inequities include specific Tier 2 and Tier 3

student reading interventions resulting from analyzing Mindplay data. Achievement Math during freshman seminar is a Tier 2 math intervention based on NWEA scores, class rank, and teacher recommendations. The formalization of a school-wide intervention process is currently underway as teachers create an SRBI guidebook. Teacher use of data has resulted in teachers and administrators successfully identifying and responding to inequities in student achievement. As teachers continue to collect, disaggregate, and use data effectively, student achievement will increase. (teacher interviews, departmental meeting minutes, teacher-generated data, self-study, Assessment Standard Subcommittee, student work, panel presentation, District Improvement Plan, Endicott survey)

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. Students reported that teachers explain unit-specific learning goals at the beginning of units. On the Endicott survey, 77 percent of students report that they understand how to meet the teachers' learning expectations. Students interviewed reported that teachers explain rubrics for summative assessments and explain unit-specific learning goals. Teachers post essential questions and learning targets for lessons and units. At the beginning of a course, teachers provide syllabi with details on course expectations, grading policies, and class rules to students and to parents at "Back to School" night. Continued explicit communication and explanation of 21st century learning expectations and unit-specific learning goals will increase the number of students who understand and are able to achieve 21st century learning expectations and unit-specific learning goals. (Endicott survey, students, classroom observations, course syllabi, teacher interviews)

The school's professional staff consistently provides students with corresponding rubrics prior to summative assessments. Students reported that teachers provide and explain school-wide and course-specific rubrics for summative assessments. Advisory teachers review school-wide rubrics at the beginning of the school year. Classrooms have one or more school-wide rubrics posted in the front of the room. Student work samples include school-wide and course-specific rubrics created by teachers. On the Endicott survey, 71.2 percent of students report they understand the rubrics provided; 68.2 percent of parents indicate they are familiar with the school-wide rubrics. An increased effort in explaining and referencing rubrics during lessons will increase the percentage of students who understand school-wide or course-specific rubrics and help those students successfully achieve expectations. (Endicott survey, students, student work, teacher interviews, classroom observations, self-study)

The professional staff employs a range of assessment strategies in each unit of study, including formative and summative assessments. Within each unit, 93 percent of teachers report and students confirm a variety of formative assessments are used, including dipsticks, guided practice, short quizzes, and teacher-student questioning. Summative assessments include analytical essays, labs, objective question tests, performance tasks, and research projects. There is some evidence of students' self-assessing, but there is limited evidence that this is a widespread practice. Students and teachers also report that exemplars and past student work are used to clarify expectations and grading practices. Samples of student work indicate an attempt to assess higher order thinking through a science lab report, engineering exam, and an analytical essay in social studies. However, students also report, and classroom observations and student work samples support, that there remains some reliance on less rigorous assessments such as

objective tests. As teachers continue to expand their range of assessments, including an emphasis on higher order thinking, teachers will better be able to measure the extent to which 21st learning expectations are being met. (classroom observations, students, teacher interviews, self-study, student work)

Teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments. Formal meetings include twice monthly departmental data teams which provide teachers with time to collaborate in the creation, analysis, and revision of assessments. The result is common formative assessments in all core subject areas. Ninety-four percent of teachers agree that they formally meet to discuss and improve assessment strategies. However, self-study and teacher interviews identify that collaboration is difficult for teachers in subject areas with only one staff member (i.e., art, music, and technical education). Departments conduct monthly meetings which also allot time to analyzing assessment data and strategies. Adjustments to learning targets, instruction, and assessments result from these departmental level meetings. For example, on the social studies final exam, revisions were made to improve question clarity. In English courses, pre-unit common formative assessments led teachers to incorporate graphic organizers to improve analysis of parallel passages. Freshman Academy teachers use common planning time to create common assessments and to analyze student achievement data. Master teachers meet with staff formally and informally to teach best assessment practices, create lessons, analyze data, and improve instruction accordingly. At the district level, the data team meets monthly to share assessment data for planning and implementing district-wide student achievement goals. Two district work groups also facilitate collaboration and alignment of common formative

assessments for English/language arts and math/science. Due to regular and formal collaboration by most teachers, assessments are created, analyzed, and revised to improve instruction, and thus benefit student achievement. (teacher interviews, self-study, master teachers, departmental data)

The school's professional staff frequently provides feedback; however, it is not consistently specific, timely, or corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work. Examples of student work provided included varied types of teacher feedback, ranging from checks and numerical scores on rubrics to short positive comments or questions, to detailed and specific corrective feedback. On the Endicott survey, 70 percent of students agree that teachers provided feedback in a timely manner; 71 percent of students agree that teachers provide suggestions for improving their work. Students reported that some teachers review tests after they are graded. One student work sample showed specific praise and corrective feedback written by the teacher on the school-wide work rubric for partners in a science lab. A student work sample showed corrective feedback on the writing rubric used in a world language class regarding the student's use of grammar. On some student work samples, categories were only circled or checked. Master teachers reported that staff discusses feedback at department and data team meetings, and assist each other in providing student feedback on some assignments. Master teachers also reported that they meet with course teachers to help them write "warm" and "cool" feedback and give students suggestions for improvement. An expanded effort to consistently provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback will help more students revise and improve their work and will improve student achievement. (Endicott survey, students, classroom observations, student work, master teachers)

Teachers regularly use formative assessments to inform and adapt their instruction to improve student learning. Formative assessments, including "do now" exercises, exit tickets, dipsticks, guided practice, short quizzes, and teacher observation, inform teachers about student attainment of learning targets. Over two-to-three week cycles, departmental data teams use pre-common formative assessments to identify students' strengths and weaknesses, create SMART goals accordingly, and plan appropriate instructional strategies to maximize student learning. For example, formative reading comprehension data caused Freshman Academy English teachers to re-teach text annotation and to increase opportunities for students to practice the skill. In science classes, teachers used common formative assessment data to incorporate more reading comprehension exercises into daily lessons and homework. However, student work samples indicated some confusion over the difference between formative and summative assessments. When teachers regularly adjust instruction based on formative assessment results, students gain clarity about their own weaknesses and teachers more effectively meet students' needs through targeted instructional strategies. (teacher interviews, departmental data, teacher-generated data, self-study, Assessment Standard Subcommittee)

Teachers and administrators regularly examine a range of evidence, including student work, common course and common grade-level assessments, individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations, standardized assessments, data from sending and receiving schools, and survey data from current students. To improve instruction and most curriculum; however, there is no formal process for collecting and examining data from post-secondary institutions and alumni surveys in order to improve curriculum and instruction.

District-wide, vertical work groups, master teacher-teacher meetings, and departmental data teams are formal ways teachers and administrators examine student work and use this information to promote instructional changes to meet 21st century learning expectations. The self-study and teacher interviews describe that teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, use student work to improve instruction, and inform most curricular changes. Common course and common grade-level assessments (i.e.. science performance tasks, midterm and final exams, art portfolios, and CTE State tests) inform the application of best instructional practices adopted from Marzano and Tomlinson, among others. The use of school-wide rubrics at least twice per marking period and the analysis of these results by administrators and teachers play a role in instructional discussions about how best to meet students' individual and collective learning needs. Standardized assessments, NOCTI, SBAC, CAPT, NWEA, and the Project Lead the Way course assessment, regularly contribute to changes in instructional practices. Data from sending schools is reviewed to assist in placing students into appropriate learning settings (i.e., PACE, AP, honors, college prep, academic, general level placement, or self-contained classrooms). Students are surveyed through end-of-course questionnaires and teachers address this feedback in their summative evaluations by planning for improvements to their instructional practice. There is no evidence of the inclusion of survey data from alumni or information from post-secondary institutions for the purpose of improving instructional practice or curriculum. When teachers and administrators use a broad range of evidence, including data from post-secondary institutions and alumni surveys, to revise curriculum and improve instruction, the school curriculum will be more responsive to students' post-secondary needs and student learning will increase. (sources needed)

Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised on a mostly informal basis, to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. The self-study identified a need to regularly review and revise grading and reporting practices. The parent portal feature of the Tyler Education Management System (TEMS) web-based portal was activated in 2013-2014 to provide parents/guardians continuous access to student grades, attendance, and comments; 29 percent of parents utilize that service. Student progress on 21st century learning expectations is reported out on quarterly report cards. Master teachers reported grading practices are revised at the beginning of the year in department meetings when teachers look at summer work, student exemplars and "calibrate" their grading of the same assignments and set grading percentages for courses; this information is then reported to the principal. The professional staff informally review and discuss grading and reporting practices throughout the year. When the school implements a formal plan to regularly review and revise grading and reporting practices to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning, students and parents will have a stronger understanding of 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, master teachers, teacher interviews)

Teaching and Learning Standard

4   **Assessment of and for Student Learning**

Commendations:

1. The range of formal and informal processes for reporting individual student progress

2. The formal data team structure

3. The clear communications of student learning expectations prior to summative assessments

4. The high visibility of school-wide rubrics

5. The collaboration in creating, analyzing, and revising assessments

6. The use of common formative assessments

Recommendations:

1. Implement the new SRBI protocols to address inequities in student achievement

2. Communicate whole-school achievement of the 21st century learning expectations to the community

3. Implement a formal program for regularly and revising grading and reporting practices

4. Survey alumni to guide curricular revisions and improve instructional practice

5. Collect and examine data from post-secondary institutions to guide curricular revisions and improve instructional practice

6. Consistently provide specific, timely and corrective feedback focused on

    helping students revise and improve work

SUPPORT STANDARDS

SCHOOL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Support Standard

⑤ School Culture and Leadership

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.

Support Standard

5   School Culture and Leadership

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. Student and teacher handbooks reflect high expectations for all students. Students must meet skills requirements in literacy, numeracy, civic, and social responsibility as performance standards for graduation. Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports reflect the school's behavioral beliefs of courtesy, pride, perseverance, and cooperation. Comparative annual data on disciplinary action reflects downward trends. In SY 2013-2014, there were 691 referrals; in SY 2014-2015, there were 295. In addition to the behavioral expectations set by teachers, the school resource officer (SRO) focuses efforts on programs and activities that improve the school climate. The school resource officer has voluntarily initiated a Warrior program to address behavior issues, and that has positively affected school culture and climate. Teachers, support personnel, and students report that the school's uniform policy has positively affected school climate and culture. Both the Freshman Connections Breakfast and a 10th grade community service project help students feel a sense of pride and connection to their school. Conversations with teachers and students reveal that much is expected of the students in terms of goal setting, behavior, and respect for others. As a result of the many efforts of teachers, administrators, and support staff to build a positive, respectful, supportive, and safe culture that nurtures its students, students at the school feel safe in and proud of their school. (SWIS data, student handbook, teacher handbook, classroom observations, teacher interviews, students, school support staff)

The school is equitable, inclusive, and ensures access to challenging academic experiences for all students, and the school populates courses throughout the curriculum with students that reflect the diversity of the student body, fosters heterogeneity, and supports achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Fifty-eight of over one hundred classes have students who are heterogeneously grouped. In addition to most elective courses, many of the core English and social studies classes are heterogeneously grouped and unleveled. Teachers who work with students with IEPs in self-contained settings maintain the school's high expectations through use of school-wide rubrics. Inclusion models and other special education strategies have been investigated and the school offers many levels of least restrictive environment for both its special education and regular education students in the Positive and Creative Education (PACE) program. Students in all levels of classes are measured and expected to achieve the school-wide learning expectations. There is diversity of enrollment in all courses that reflects the make-up of the student body, so that students who are considered to be part of a minority population are not homogeneously grouped.   When schools are equitable, inclusive, and ensure access to challenging academic experiences for all students, and when schools populate courses throughout the curriculum with students who reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, and support achievement of 21st century learning expectations, students have access to curriculum that is appropriate for their learning needs.   (self-study, teacher interviews, classroom observations, program of studies)

The school has a formal ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. Students report that the constancy and

consistency of the school's advisory program from year to year helps them build connections with teachers and the school. Students report a sense of belonging and easing of anxiety because of the constancy of their meetings with their advisors; however, high teacher turnover has caused students to have inconsistent advisory experiences. The advisory program incorporates the core values and beliefs, as well as the academic and civic and social expectations. In particular, the students interact with their school and community, demonstrate respect, and effectively communicate. The 9th grade advisory program focuses on long- and short-term goal setting, which culminates in a 9th grade capstone project. In 10th grade, students are asked to complete a community service project. This 10th grade project allows the students to connect to the broader Ansonia community and allows students to connect their project to real-world problems. At this time, even though there is a 9-12 advisory program for all students, advisory curriculum for the 11th and 12th grade is being finalized. Also, these projects draw together many members of the school community in all grades. Because there is a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well, students are better able to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (advisory binder, student work, self-study, teacher interviews, students)

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; and apply skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and development. The spirit of collaborative reflection and inquiry exists at the school. Almost 90 percent of teachers surveyed

feel that input from evaluators and supervisors plays an important role in improving their instructional practices. Ongoing conversations, specifically about school-wide rubrics and data from normed assessments such as NWEA, are both formal and informal. Collaboration occurs regularly within departments, but not across departments. Administrators report that teachers are regularly approved for professional development. Ample time is made available for professional development with release time scheduled on four full days and fifteen half-days. Additionally, the administrative team works closely with master teachers. These teachers attend training outside the district and bring their learning back to the school. Master teachers work closely with the administrative team to assess the needs of the school and teachers, plan research-based learning strategies, and provide support and "just in time" training, which focuses on specific training across the curriculum. Their efforts improve instructional practices and student outcomes across the curriculum. Teachers attend programs which enhance their teaching strategies. The Endicott survey indicates that 70 percent of the staff agrees that the school's professional development programs enable teachers to acquire and use skills to improve instruction and assessment. Because the principal and professional staff are actively engaged in reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning through professional development, in and outside of the school, and apply the skills, practices and ideas, they are improving curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices. (teacher interviews, Endicott survey, 2014-2015 school calendar, self-study)

School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning. School leaders have adopted the SEED (CT System for Educator Evaluation and Development) evaluation framework, which is research-based and focuses on

student learning and instructional practices. This evaluation process has unified Ansonia High School's efforts to improve instructional outcomes by using data from normed assessments. Administrators and master teachers also use instructional rounds to improve instruction and student learning. An example of whole-school instructional practices that have been implemented is the practice of close reading. Because teachers and administrators focus their efforts on using research-based evaluation and supervision processes, student learning has improved. (Ansonia Teacher Evaluation Plan, Ansonia High School Improvement Plan, panel presentation, teacher interviews, school leadership team, self-study)

The organization of time mostly supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students. The master schedule has been formally reviewed recently and continues to be under review. The current school schedule is traditional in nature, with students assigned to seven classes over six periods per day. This allows students to have almost sixty-minute instructional periods, which intends to promote effective instructional practices, collaborative work, and in-depth exploration of topics. However, the schedule does not always allow for teachers to collaborate within or across content areas. Within the school's organization, there are a limited number of smaller learning communities, such as the PACE program and the Freshman Academy. The flexible schedule at PACE provides opportunities for students to be successful. When the organization of time allows for teachers to collaborate within and among content areas, the students and the school will benefit from improved student learning. (teacher interviews, self-study, school leadership team)

Student load and class size enables teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students at the school. Board policy states a limit of 32 pupils in no more than 14 classrooms with 30 or fewer in all other classrooms. Typical class size is reported to be 18. Enrollment ranges between three students in Business Computer Applications to 30 students in art and physical education. Between 62-85 percent of stakeholders report that student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. Typical student loads carried by teachers is 90 students each year. Students report that class sizes are small enough for teachers to be able to provide personalized instruction, yet not too small for students to engage in meaningful discourse. Because of class sizes, teachers are able to meet the needs of individual students and to provide a personalized education experience. (Endicott survey, teacher interviews, student shadowing, students, self-study)

The principal effectively works with other building leaders and provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The principal works with the assistant principal, the PACE consultant, three master teachers and seven lead teachers to provide instructional leadership which is rooted in the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations of the school. The principal remains current on education research and best practices and shares that vision as related to the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations through weekly meetings with master teachers, monthly interdisciplinary curriculum meetings, and monthly meetings with lead teachers. Lead teachers disseminate said research and practices to their respective departments which is considered in the development of curriculum, learning targets, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) and Indicators of Academic Growth and Development (IAGDs). Teachers reported that the current school-wide instructional focus area

is close reading which is being integrated across the curriculum as reported by teachers and parents. Fifty-nine percent of students and 86 percent of staff agree that the principal and other school-based administrators provide instructional leadership that is consistent with the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Students reported that the principal makes expectations clear through class meetings and daily announcements. The staff reported that the principal has an open-door policy and is receptive and supportive of staff generated ideas regarding instructional practices. When the school's core values and beliefs are transparently integrated through all levels of instructional leadership, then these values and beliefs drive instruction. (self-study, organizational chart, students, parents, school leadership team, Endicott survey)

Teachers and students are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership; however, parental involvement in meaningful decision-making is limited. The principal models accessibility and openness to feedback through the School Governance Council. Although not indicated on the organizational chart of the school's decision-making bodies, literature provided to families indicate that the Council "…works together to improve student achievement and…advise the principal in making programmatic and operational changes." Other examples of teacher, student, and parental involvement include the PTSO, Data Teams, Student Questionnaire/Survey of Course, Student Advisory Reflection, Student Advisory Survey, and Staff JIT Training Surveys. Students and staff reported that the principal has an "open-door" policy and is always visible in the building. The self-study committee reported that there are twelve members on the School Governance Council. The school provides information about the School Governance Council on printed flyers sent home

and on the school's website. Students reported that the student government is active and meets

with administration monthly, although only 35 percent of students report that they are involved

in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.

Staff and parents reported that although there are parents who are very involved in school

organizations, they tend to be the same parents who actively participate in those organizations.

The results of an informal parent survey conducted through Survey Monkey with 19 responses

indicated that 84 percent of those who responded agree with the statement, "I have opportunities

for involvement at this school." All levels of leadership, staff, and parents reported that there is a

need to get more parents involved in the decision-making process. District leadership reported

that they invite parents to participate in school activities through email, text, phone, and

traditional mail communications. It is unknown which communication method is the most

effective for reaching parents. For example, the number of parents with Internet connection is not

known. The leadership team recognizes there are some barriers to parental involvement such as

conflicting work hours and child care, so some meetings have been offered later in the day, and

the school makes babysitting services and refreshments available to encourage parents to attend

such events. With increased involvement of teachers, students, and parents in meaningful

decision-making, student responsibility and ownership of learning will increase. (self-study,

Endicott survey, students, district leadership, teacher interviews, Survey Monkey results, school

leadership team)

Teachers often exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and

to increase students' engagement in learning. Teachers serve as instructional leaders by working

in the capacities of master teachers and lead teachers, whereby instructional initiatives are

brought to administration from teachers and disseminated to teachers from the administration. Teachers are able to request specific professional development through the "just in time" training program which was developed and implemented by the master teachers. The staff also serves as members of the Student Support Council, School Climate Committee, District Data Team, District SRBI Committee, and Building Data and Analysis Teams across the curriculum. Initiatives brought forward and implemented by the staff include PBIS, the advisory program, PACE program, PRIDE journalism, and the use of Naviance. Additionally, the staff serves as advisors for 40 extracurricular clubs and activities. Because teachers exercise initiative and leadership, students have increased opportunities to engage in their learning. (self-study, list of extracurricular advisors, chart of faculty positions on leadership teams/committees, Steering Committee members)

The school board, superintendent, and principal demonstrate collaborative, reflective, and constructive practices in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. The relationship among the school board, superintendent, and principal is reported to be collegial and transparent. Sixty-eight percent of staff reports that the school board, superintendent, and principal collaborate in the process of achieving learning expectations. Examples of collaboration among the three groups include Administrative Council meetings, instructional rounds, monthly meetings with lead and master teachers, district and building administrators, monthly data team meetings, faculty meetings, and quarterly School Governance Council meetings. When the school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective and focused on attaining the school's 21st century learning expectations, student learning is enhanced. (central office personnel, school board, administrators)

The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. Board members and the superintendent report that the principal is the true leader of the school, and the parents referred to AHS as "his" school. The principal has worked within the district for several years and has established a high level of credibility and positive working relationships with central office administrators and the board of education. The principal is an advocate of professional development programs which enhance teaching and learning and he routinely supports such requests. The principal models the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations as related to academic, civic, and social expectations through his instructional leadership, community outreach efforts, and engagement with students, faculty, and staff. Board policy 2133 supports the principal's autonomy. Sixty percent of staff and 79 percent of parents agree that the school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient authority to lead the school. When the school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority, building-based decisions are made in a timely, efficient, and proactive manner to support positive student outcomes. (Endicott survey, board policy 2133, board of education, central office personnel)

Support Standard

5 **School Culture and Leadership**

Commendations:

1. The school resource officer's Warrior program

2. The consistent commitment of school staff to connect with students in non-academic setting

3. The use of data to drive professional development needs

4. The "just in time" training model

5. The small class sizes

6. The multiple opportunities for stakeholders to be part of the decision-making process

7. The multiple modes of soliciting feedback from stakeholders

8. The continuation of the Governance Council

9. The multiple opportunities for teachers to exercise leadership

10. The multiple examples of collaboration among the school board, superintendent, and the principal

11. The autonomy that the board and superintendent afford the high school principal

12. The principal's presence and support of academic and extracurricular programs

Recommendations:

1. Ensure the school-wide advisory program reflects 21st century learning
    experiences

2. Investigate options for increasing collaboration time

3. Clarify the School Governance Council role as part of the school's decision-
    making bodies

4. Increase awareness for students in regards to decision-making opportunities

Support Standard

6 School Resources for Learning

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

Support Standard

6 **School Resources for Learning**

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 school has adopted PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention Support) school-wide to foster and recognize positive behaviors. Four times a year, teachers nominate students who exhibit consistent school appropriate behaviors with a positive school attitude for the Charger Pride award. Students who receive the award earn a breakfast and school-wide recognition. Students nominate peers for the Random Act of Kindness/Pay It Forward award. Chosen students are announced on the school's TV announcements and their names are posted in the main lobby. The school adopted the motto "Chargers promoting positive change" (CPPC) to support their behavioral expectations of courtesy, pride, perseverance, cooperation (CPPC). The PACE (Positive and Creative Education) program is the alternative program for students who need more intense support to meet the school's learning expectations. Teachers, counselors, parents/guardians, social workers, school psychologist, administrators, or students themselves refer struggling students to the program. Students and teachers meet in advisory group each Wednesday in order to provide students an adult with whom they feel connected and a group of students with whom to form bonds. Teachers, counselors, social workers, and the school psychologist collaborate to determine what interventions a student may need to be more successful. Special education teachers consult with general education teachers to ensure identified students are provided appropriate support to meet course learning expectations. Paraprofessionals provide in-class support; however, some paraprofessionals support more than

one class during the same period. Special education teachers teach self-contained classes in English, math, science, and social studies for students needing more intensive support and a modified course. Achievement Math and Developmental Reading Tier II and Tier III are academic interventions to improve students' reading and math skills for Freshman Academy students. The school resource officer provides opportunities for students to participate in a morning Judo program (the Warrior program) as an alternative to suspension and to build character. The school psychologist and social worker provide identified students with counseling services and the Charger Health Clinic licensed social worker provide registered general education services with counseling services. As a result of these timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies, all Ansonia High School students receive support necessary to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (students, teachers, school psychologist, self-study, school publications)

The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services. The school provides students on the first day of school and at new student orientation a copy of the school handbook and free-reduced lunch forms. The school has a website with links to all support staff and programs. The guidance department sends out mailings about services that they provide including counseling, college planning, and course selection. The guidance department mails out and posts on the website a quarterly newsletter to all families outlining upcoming events and important information. Support staff contacts parents through phone calls, emails or the family's preferred method of communication regarding IEPs, annual and triennial PPTs, and community resources. Special education teachers make phone calls and send emails to parents/guardians of students on their caseload to remind them about

Open House and parent conferences. The guidance department invites all families to pick up report cards after the first quarter and to meet and discuss any needs or concerns with teachers, support staff, and administrators. The ELL teacher translates a limited amount of paperwork for the student population, so students can explain information to their parents/guardians. Parents/guardians are informed about the PACE and Judo program when their students have been referred to the program. Because the school provides information to all families, students are able to take advantage of available support services. (SRO, office staff, psychologist, special education teacher, parents, School Resources for Learning Standard Subcommittee)

Support services staff effectively use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student. The guidance department utilizes Tyler Education Management Solutions to create student schedules, track student progress, and produce transcripts. They also use the school's website to inform parents and students of informational sessions about various programs including, but not limited to, Financial Aid Night, College Night, and college visits. School counselors have introduced and are in the process of expanding the use of Naviance in the school. Naviance is currently used in guidance to assist students with the college search process. Morning and afternoon announcements on video broadcasting and over the PA inform students of Charger Health Clinic sign ups, college visits, and other upcoming school events. Special education teachers and the school psychologist use IEP Direct to produce IEPs. Special education teachers disseminate IEPs to the regular education teachers of special education students. Moby Max, an Internet-based program is used to support reading, writing, math, and science skill development and to track progress. The school psychologist uses two iPads for assistive technology with her students and for assessment purposes. The school psychologist

maintains communication with parents through emails and phone calls. The PACE program has projectors in each of their classrooms and the special education teachers have access to a Netbook cart, containing 24 Netbooks in their self-contained classes. The Life Skills classroom has a projector and printer in its classroom. The PACE program maintains contact with parents through emails and phone calls. When technology is effectively used to deliver coordinated services, students are better able to succeed. (self-study, guidance, psychologist, PACE teacher, nurse, front office staff)

School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling; engage in individual meetings with all students; and deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers; and use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. Currently, the guidance department does not have a written developmental program or a process for meeting with groups of students. Counselors meet with students on a drop in and scheduled basis. Counselors meet with students four times per year unless more intervention is necessary. The new counselors have worked to provide a comfortable environment in which students questions are answered and needs are met. Counselors meet with individual students but currently do not meet in groups. They are looking to provide group counseling based on needs of the students to be determined through a school-wide survey. Counselors, social workers, and the school psychologist provide parents/guardians information about and make referrals to the Griffin Clinic and outside agencies when students need more intensive support. Counselors use

relevant assessment data (progress reports, report cards, failure reports) in an ongoing manner to monitor the progress of all students. Counselors develop a support plan and communicate with parents/guardians and teachers for students who show inadequate progress. Counselors plan to survey students, teachers, and parents/guardians to determine how they can best support students. There is currently not a written developmental program, but the counseling staff is working to create and implement this program. When school counselors implement a written developmental program and meet with students on an individual and group basis, all students will be provided information and support needed to ensure they are prepared to meet the school's learning expectations. (students, parents, teachers, school psychologist, school counselor, self-study)

The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support who provide preventive health services and direct intervention services; use an appropriate referral process; and conduct ongoing student health assessments; however, health services does not use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. The school has one registered nurse for 680 students, which meets the state requirement. Preventive health services provided by the school nurse include vision, hearing, and scoliosis testing, staff training in EpiPen use, and the No Tanning Pledge initiative for seniors around senior prom time designed by the Melanoma Foundation. Direct intervention services provided by the school nurse include interviews with students to determine if a medical issue exists, assessment of temperature, and distribution of Tums, Tylenol, or ibuprofen for students with written parent permission. The school nurse sees an average of 60 students per day for various issues, including minor issues such as bandage distribution to accident and medical

issues that require outside referrals. She uses a written sign-in system for documentation of visit. The school nurse has limited space in the health office. She is unable to conduct interviews with students or speak to parents/guardians or staff in a space that ensures confidentiality. The school nurse refers students to the Griffin social worker for initial assessment between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., the Griffin Health Services for registered students, and the area health clinics as needed. There is no social worker readily available for the nurse to refer students to before 8:00 a.m. and after 1:00 p.m. due to the demands on the school social worker. The school nurse maintains records of student physicals for all students. Students are required to have one physical prior to their third year in high school. Athletes are required to have yearly physicals and present documentation to the school nurse. All documentation is maintained for seven years. The school nurse does not use data or elicit feedback from the community to improve services. Endicott survey results show 66.5 percent of parents agree the health services personnel provide preventive health and direct intervention services. Endicott survey results also show 73.8 percent of students agree with the statement, "I am comfortable going to the school nurse." When health services uses relevant assessment data and access to the school social worker is increased, then health services provided to students will contribute to student readiness to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (school nurse, school psychologist, students, self-study, Endicott survey)

Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an inconsistent 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; 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. The library media specialist (LMS) is engaged in the implementation of the school curriculum. The LMS collaborates with teachers and conducts lessons in teachers' classrooms and in the library to assist students with research projects, website evaluation, online search strategies, and MLA citation. The LMS provides instruction to students and teachers on utilizing the school's online catalogue, subscription databases, and eBook resources. The LMS provides professional and student resources to teachers when requested. The library houses 29 desktop computers for student use, seven portable Chromebook carts, and three portable Netbook carts for teachers to reserve for use in their classrooms. Ten Kindles are available on a sign-out basis for students and teachers. The library has an extensive print and eBook fiction collection, audiovisual resources, online subscription databases, access to Destiny, Turnitin, Easybib, and eduCanon. The LMS borrows materials requested by staff or that are of high interest to students from local libraries that are not in the school's library collection. According to the Endicott survey, 64 percent of students agree the library has the resources they need, and 70.6 percent of students agree that the library provides them with a wide range of materials, technology, and other information services. The library is scheduled to open each morning 30 minutes before first period, each period during the school day for students who have study halls and for classes to work/research or receive instruction from the LMS, and in the afternoons for an hour. The Endicott survey results show 75.2 percent of students agree with the statement, "The school library is available to me before school, during and after hours," but only 24.6 percent of students agree that they use the library

often during classes. Sign in logs indicate that 350 students visit the library weekly. Several factors interfere with the consistency of library availability to students. The library is used for meetings, testing, and other activities that occur during the school day. There is one LMS and one library aide who provide support to students and teachers before, after, and during the school day. The library aide is re-assigned several hours a day to assist in the main office, and the library media specialist has other responsibilities that require her to be out of the library at times. The library is understaffed when one or the other adult is not in the library, and the library is closed when both adults are otherwise assigned. The LMS purchases up-to-date and high-interest materials to encourage students' recreational reading. The Makerspace provides students an opportunity to be creative and to have fun in the library. LMS engages in ongoing formal and informal dialogues with colleagues in order to assess library services and to make determinations on future acquisitions and goals. Students partake in the school book club and are encouraged to give their input and feedback on library practices and acquisitions. LMS has also started using parent and student surveys to assist in these decisions. When the library has appropriate staffing, it will more effectively meet student and teacher needs. (students, teacher interviews, teachers, library media specialist, Endicott survey)

Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have a mostly 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. Special education teachers, ELL

teacher, general education teachers, school counselors, school psychologist, and social workers collaborate to ensure students are getting needed support academically, emotionally, and with mental health issues that interfere with students achieving the school's learning expectations. Collaboration is in the form of face-to-face meetings, PPT meetings, 504 meetings, email communication, and tri-weekly progress reports submitted by general education teachers. The ELL teacher is scheduled at the high school only two blocks a day. This interferes with her ability to consult more frequently with general education teachers and to work more consistently with students. Most special education students are included in general educations classes with support from 1:1 aides and paraprofessionals, however some paraprofessionals support more than one class during the same period. A special education teacher and a paraprofessional support students in the Freshman Academy courses. Students in the Life Skills program who participate in general education classes are supported in these classes and during job shadow/ internships with local businesses with 1:1 aides. The cost of transportation limits these opportunities for authentic learning opportunities for Life Skills students. Special education teachers teach self-contained classes in math, science, social studies, and English. Special education teachers evaluate ninth grade student placements in self-contained classes at the beginning of ninth grade to determine appropriateness of placement. Students who are inappropriately placed are transferred to general education classrooms. All stakeholders can request student placement in general education classes and self-contained classes, and placement is determined using several data points. All ELL students receive instruction in general education classes with the exception of one block a day when they receive direct instruction in language. Social work services are provided by one social worker to all special education students who require services through IEPs and to general education students in PACE. As a

result of the increasing number of special education and general education students who require social work services, one social worker employed by the school cannot adequately meet the demand. Triennial special education testing, easy CBM data, NWEA results, Moby Max reports, psychological testing, and tri-weekly progress reports from general education teachers are used individually and collectively to improve services and to ensure that each student is given appropriate supports to achieve the school's learning expectations. The ELL teacher meets the state testing requirements and uses results from the LAS Links assessment to determine continued eligibility in ELL classes. The Life Skills teacher uses daily informal assessment to individualize instruction to ensure student learning. When students have greater access to a social worker and the ELL teacher, Life Skills students have more opportunity for authentic learning outside of school, the support services provided to identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, will adequately meet the needs of the students and better prepare them to meet the school's learning expectations. (teachers, self-study, ELL teacher, classroom observations)

Support Standard

6 **School Resources for Learning**

Commendations:

1. The Charger Pride and Pay it Forward Awards that recognize individual student achievement

2. The PACE program

3. The school resource officer's Judo program and support of student behavioral success

4. The introduction and implementation of Freshman Academy

5. The significant effort of support staff to make contact with parents and to keep parents/guardians informed

6. The collaboration and cooperation between school health services and Griffin Health Services

7. The collaborative work between teachers and the LMS

8. The library resources for students and staff

9. The general education tri-weekly progress reports

Recommendations:

1. Implement a written developmental guidance curriculum

2. Provide a space in which the school nurse can engage in confidential conversations

3. Elicit feedback from students, staff, and the community to improve health services

4. Ensure consistent staffing of the library and ensure the library open throughout the school day

5. Ensure that social work services are sufficient to address student needs

Support Standard

7 Community Resources for Learning

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.

<center>**Support Standard**</center>

7   Community Resources for Learning

The community and the district's governing body provide dependable but limited funding for a wide range of school programs and services, inconsistent and inadequate funding for professional and support staff and instructional materials and supplies, sufficient funding for on-going professional development and curriculum revision and a lack of funding for technology support. Due to budgetary constraints the high school is not able to offer a wide range of school programs and services. According to the Endicott survey, only 25.3 percent parents agree that the community provides dependable funding for program and services. Over the last three years, the high school education budget has been reduced by $3,000.00. There are two world languages offered, Spanish and Mandarin. Upper level Spanish classes as well as some art, music, and technology classes are offered as a combined course. Students and parents identified a need for additional world language choices, such as French.

Due to staffing limitations the library/media aide covers main office duties which causes the library/media center to be closed during parts of the school day and impacts the ability for students to access the resources of the media center. Interviews with the special education department revealed that paraprofessionals are assigned to multiple classes during the same period. The special education department reported that there is a need to add more paraprofessionals to cover this overlapping schedule. The guidance department reported the need for an additional social worker to aid in their case load. The director of facilities indicated

the need for another full-time custodian to help maintain the cleanliness and upkeep of the building and grounds.

Faculty has access to professional development. The district pays for six credits of college courses per year per teacher for professional development. Bi-weekly meetings, four full professional development days and 15 early release days are incorporated into the schedule. Over the last three years, professional development has been adequately funded. Over the last three years, the equipment budget reflects an increase of $3,500.00. The director of facilities stated that he is given adequate funding to maintain and repair all equipment. The school does not budget for a full range of technology support. Over the last three years, there has been a zero budget given to technology supplies. According to the Endicott survey, only 29.8 percent of staff agrees that the district provides adequate funding for a wide range of technology support.

Over the last three years, the instructional supplies line in the budget has been decreased by $3,400.00. Teachers have reported that the decrease has affected the availability of consumables for the culinary and technology education classes. Over the last three years, the budget for textbooks has decreased. Teachers have reported textbooks with a publication date of 2000. The special education department is in need of books to provide similar curriculum to the mainstreamed classroom. The math, English and science departments have reported the lack of updated textbooks. When funding is dependable and sufficient, students will have access to a wide variety of services and programs. (classroom observations, self-study, student shadowing, panel presentation, facility tour, teacher interviews, teachers, department leaders, Endicott survey)

The school funds programs to ensure maintenance and repair of the building and school plant and to keep the school clean on a daily basis; however, it does not consistently develop plans to properly maintain, catalogue and replace equipment. The school district's director of facilities and grounds is responsible for maintaining all documentation and for scheduling all required inspections from local, state, and federal agencies. The school's director of facilities maintains a record of scheduled maintenance and inspections, but appropriate documentation to support specific dates of maintenance and repairs is not readily or consistently available. The school budget provides funding for routines repairs of the building, equipment replacement, and new equipment. The members of the school community express satisfaction with the cleanliness of the school with 98 percent of staff and 88.6 percent of the parents surveyed agreeing or strongly agreeing the school is cleaned and well maintained. Although there are four full-time custodians, the director of facilities expressed a need for an additional custodian in order to meet national standards. A copy of the custodial duties check off sheet shows clear responsibility for supervision of the building's maintenance, upkeep, and cleanliness. When a school properly catalogues maintenance and equipment replacement, it is able to ensure maintenance and repair of the building and school plant according to state and federal codes and to keep the school clean on a daily basis. (custodial duty checklist, custodial duty job description, classroom observations, teacher interviews, director of facilities, students, self-study, Endicott survey, Green Cleaning Program Mission Statement, Elevator Renewal Invoice, Fire Marshall Report)

The community provides limited funds and the school does not effectively implement long-range plans that address programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs,

technology needs and capital improvements. The school district's Three-Year Improvement Plan, ratified by the board of education in May 2015, offers an action plan to address areas of needs of improvement and the achievement gaps between students who come from homes of poverty and those who do not, with limited information on how the plan will be addressed in the school's programs and services. The school does not offer a long-range budget plan to address enrollment changes and staffing needs, technology, or facility needs.

Technology needs are addressed in part of the Connecticut State Department of Education for Educational Technology Plan Template, which was adopted June 30, 2015; however, long-range plans passed June 30, 2015 are not further addressed besides routine maintenance, such as monthly browser updates, bi-annual operating system updates and software. Teachers advise that they have access to two main copy machines to print materials or to make copies; however, if a copy machine experiences a malfunction, teachers report there is a one or two day turnaround for repairs, hindering their ability to print materials needed for instruction. Over the past three years, there has been zero budget given to technology supplies. Grants such as Carl D. Perkins Grant, Pine Trust, Project Lead the Way, Alliance Grant and a state funded technology grant have been used to fund technology growth within the school including seven carts with Chromebooks and three carts with thirty Netbooks. According to the Endicott survey, 74.6 percent of students agree or strongly agree they have computers accessible to them before, during, and after school hours. Technology needs for a school-wide telephone system upgrade will be met by the end of 2016.

The principal and director of facilities expressed that the board of education does have a long-range plan that addresses capital improvements, including a new roof by 2019, a sidewalk added

along Pulaski Highway, and improvements to the softball field based on Title IX recommendations. The director of finance noted the installation of solar panels has saved about $50,000 over the past five years, but now the school is breaking even due to the decreased cost of energy and is unsure of the future plans for the solar paneling.

Based on limited long-range plans, teachers expressed concerns on funding for technology needs once grants, such as Carl D. Perkins, state-funded technology, and Pine Trust are no longer available. Students and teachers expressed limitations in program areas, such as more variety in elective classes, which are not funded. Teachers expressed funding limitations in staffing of paraprofessionals and secretaries. When the school district implements a long-range plan which includes plans for anticipated enrollment changes and staffing needs, technology and facility needs, and when the community commits the funds to affect this plan, then the school will better meet the learning needs of all students. (Endicott survey, 2015 District Improvement Plan, students, teacher interviews, director of facilities, facility tour, principal, self-study)

Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget. Teachers submit lists of "needs and wants" to lead teachers. Departmental meetings are held to discuss the feasibility of the requests. Lead teachers review the budget requests and bring them to the principal. The building principal has the responsibility for allocating and spending the major proportion of monies designated for teaching and learning at the school. The principal has an opportunity to speak publicly on behalf of the school budget at the board of education meetings. Administrative Council meetings allow the superintendent to provide updates and feedback on budgetary concerns. The principal receives current and

regularly updated information on the status of budget allocations from the superintendent. The principal disseminates budgetary information to the lead teachers who then share the information with the faculty. Because faculty and administrators are actively involved the budgetary process, there is a clear and transparent understanding of fiscal concerns. (teacher interviews, self-study, panel presentation, teachers, school leadership team)

The school site and plant mostly supports the delivery of quality school programs and services. During interviews teacher stated that science labs are not sufficient in number to deliver a 21st century curriculum. The access to science labs is inequitable and limits access for certain science courses, such as general science and biology. The library/media center is appropriate in space and adequately equipped to support the school's 21st century curriculum. According to the self-study report, students access computers in the library to facilitate independent research and inquiry. The cafeteria /student dining services and the food preparation area are sufficient in size and adequately equipped. The dining facilities are able to successfully handle the preparing and serving of 500 lunches daily. In addition, they also serve breakfast and weekend backpack meals. The visual and performing arts, physical education and technology space are adequate to deliver high quality school programs. Teachers reported that some classrooms have limited space, but the majority of the classrooms are large enough to deliver quality academic programs. Administrative and guidance suites, along with the faculty workrooms, provide adequate and suitable work space. The health suite does not have adequate space to assure student privacy or confidentiality when dealing with the school nurse. Security cameras were installed in the parking areas and the building. There are adequate conference rooms available in the building. There is Title IX compliance violation concerning the softball field. When the facility addresses

the issues of lab availability, privacy in the school nurse office, and Title IX compliance, the school will deliver high quality school programs and services. (self-study, teacher interviews, school leadership team, facility tour)

The school does not consistently maintain documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws. The school has on file a current fire inspection report that reflects compliance with local fire regulations. The school has implemented a Voluntary Corrective Action Plan to address issues identified in a 2012 ADA compliance review. That review found that the building is handicapped accessible. The school is not in compliance with the federal "Right to Know Law" with regards to Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS). The school nurse is not in possession of the MSDS for the hazardous chemical used in the school facility or science classroom; however the front office does have a MSDS binder. The Food Services Director reports that the cafeteria is up to date on local health department inspection, but no documentation of this inspection was provided. As of 2014, the school is in compliance with state elevator certification and inspection requirements. When a school properly maintains documentation on the physical plant and facilities, then they ensure compliance with federal and state laws and local fire, health, and safety regulations. (Facility tour, teacher interview, central office personnel, department leaders, elevator inspection certification, fire inspection report, food service director interview, nurse interview)

The professional staff actively attempt 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. Electronic communication from administrators, counselors, and teachers is used in the

form of emails, District Facebook page, Guidance Newsletter, Connect Ed telecommunications, TEMS parent portal, Charger TV, electronic events sign and the school website. Parents, teachers, teacher logs and guidance counselors conveyed that mailings of parent packets and phone calls home are means to engage parents and families as partners in each student's education, including those families who have less technology available to them. Guidance counselors schedule parent meetings at times which are convenient for the parents to encourage parent engagement. The school psychologist employs the best means expressed by the parents to communicate and relay information about the student. In the Endicott survey 72.4 percent of the parents surveyed agree or strongly agree the professional staff actively engages their family as partners in their child's education. In parent discussions, parents reported the school engages them in their child's education.

The steps the professional staff make to engage those families less connected with the school include home-to-school/parent connection breakfast as part of their freshman advisory program, Back to School Night, two afternoon/night academic parent conferences in November, NWEA parent information night, Financial Aid Night, AP potential information session and a school-wide college fair. Furthermore, the professional staff indicated they have offered babysitting services, a magician, food and parent transportation to continue to improve parent communication for those less connected with the school. These efforts have been met with limited success and parent buy-in. The school psychologist, social worker, student resource liaison and the school resource officer make home visits on an as-needed basis when parent contact is unsuccessful via mail and telephone.

The school has an established School Governance Council comprised of teachers, parents, students, administrators and community leaders. Parents expressed that the School Governance Council meets quarterly and provides an opportunity to give input about their thoughts and concerns about staff and parent engagement. The school also has an established Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO), which also works with the School Governance Council to disseminate information to parents. However, parents expressed there is a need for more parent involvement in the school with volunteering more with the PTSO, using school communication tools effectively and putting more emphasis on academics. In the Endicott survey, 29.8 percent of students agree or strongly agree that their parents participate in school. With continued and targeted engagement of all families and parents, the school will successfully strengthen school-to-home partnerships to increase student success. (parents, teacher interviews, principal, students, school psychologist, guidance counselors, self-study, Endicott survey, Guidance Newsletter, school website, facility tour)

The school effectively develops productive community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning; however, parent partnerships are limited. The school also has a number of opportunities that promote student learning through formal business and industry partnerships. The opportunities for partnership within the community include school-based Sikorsky Credit Union, Texas Roadhouse, Valley Community Foundation, Big Y, Ansonia Nature Center, Ansonia Doyle Center, Christ Episcopal Food Bank, Valley YMCA, My Sister's Place, Marshalls, Molto Bene Restaurant, Ansonia Public Library and Griffin Hospital. Students are able to work with the partnerships within community service projects, special education transition/job site programs and internships/job shadowing. Students are encouraged to

participate in internship and mentorship programs to further develop their academic, personal, and professional growth. These partnerships allow for students to experience real-world activities that link classroom knowledge with authentic application. Parents serve on the Student Governance Council and PTSO, which support the school's decision-making on educational needs to support student learning; however, more parental involvement is needed in these organizations.

The school has partnerships with area colleges and universities. The school community benefits from in-house college visits, job fairs, and college fairs. Through partnership programs students have the opportunity to extend their learning by attending classes to receive college credit for four University of Connecticut (UCONN) ECE classes, and six courses through Housatonic Community College (HCC). With the help of the State of Connecticut and its "Project Opening Doors," Ansonia High School was able to expand the Advanced Placement courses at the school over the past six years. Students can enroll in eleven Advanced Placement (AP) courses to earn additional credits. All AP, UCONN and HCC course have open enrollment. The Bridges Program in the school is designed to foster awareness and successful transition to college requirements and opportunities at HCC through four college readiness workshops. In addition, there are five Project Lead the Way courses which will allow students the opportunity to receive college credit through the University of New Haven once accreditation has been completed. Teachers work with the colleges and universities on how to improve high school curriculum and instruction with regards to delivery of the courses affiliated with the colleges. In addition, teachers and students have the opportunity to attend workshops affiliated with those courses at the college or university campus. Because the school has developed community, business, and

higher education partnerships, students have greater access to increased learning opportunities.

(self-study, teacher interviews, students, Project Lead the Way self-assessment, HCC program

description, School Governance Council meeting minutes, Sophomore Advisory Community

Service Project, Life skills job business partners list, nonprofit profile provided by

giveGreater.org)

Support Standard

7   **Community Resources for Learning**

Commendations:

1. The school and grounds that are clean and well maintained

2. The staff who find creative ways to fund technology programs

3. The inclusive budget process

4. The dedicated work space for teachers, staff, and students

5. The frequent communication with parents

6. The wide range of AP and college credit programs

7. The open enrollment policy for all advanced courses

8. The alliance with community businesses and professional groups

Recommendations:

1. Provide dependable funding for sufficient support staff, main office classified staff and a full range of technology support along with sufficient instructional materials and supplies

2. Provide a system of documentation of maintenance and equipment replacement

3. Maintain accurate records of maintenance and equipment

4. Take appropriate steps to bring the softball field in compliance with Title IX Federal regulations

5. Create and implement a long-range plan to address enrollment changes and staffing needs

6. Develop a formal long-range plan for purchasing and maintaining equipment within the facility

7. Ensure equitable access and an appropriate number of science labs

8. Ensure a catalogue of MSDS for all chemicals in the physical plant and facilities is provided in the appropriate locations

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 Ansonia High School. The faculty, school board, and superintendent should be apprised by the building administration yearly of progress made addressing visiting committee recommendations.

Since it is in the best interest of the students that the citizens of the district become aware of the strengths and limitations of the school and suggested recommendations for improvement, the Committee requires that the evaluation report be made public in accordance with the Committee'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 Committee 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 Committee requires that the principal of Ansonia High School 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 Committee 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 Committee 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 Committee has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Committee within sixty days (60) of occurrence any substantive change which negatively impacts on the school's adherence to the Committee'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 Committee's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix on page xx. 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 Committee office has current statistical data on the school.

The Committee 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 Committee'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 Committee staff following the on-site visit.

The visiting committee would like to express its appreciation to the students, faculty, staff, and school officials for the warm welcome and genuine hospitality extended throughout the accreditation visit.

Ansonia High School

NEASC Accreditation Visit

October 25-28, 2015

<u>Visiting Committee</u>

Donald Gates Retired Principal 240 Skeet Club Rd. Durham, CT 06422-1016	Teresa Hartsoe West Haven High School West Haven, CT 06516
Garrett Dukette, Assistant Chair Ashord School Ashford, CT 06279	Caroline Fitzpatrick Douglas High School Douglas, MA 01516
Maria Ehrhardt Valley Regional High School Deep River, CT 06417	Heather Clark Killingly High School 226 Putnam Pike Dayville, CT 06241
Liz Fridinger Watertown High School Watertown, CT 06795	Zenaida Vazquez Francis T. Maloney High School Meriden, CT 06450
Sandra Silva New London High School New London, CT 06320	L. Rodney Scudder Granby Memorial High School Granby, CT 06035
Roger Hansell New Canaan High School New Canaan, CT 06480	Cynthia Freyberger Exeter Reg. Cooperative SD Exeter, NH 03833
Susan Mazzonna South Windsor High School South Windsor, CT 06074	Christine Troup Bacon Academy Colchester, CT 06415
Traci Cook Danbury High School Danbury, CT 06811	Lyn Holzman Windsor High School Windsor, CT 06095

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

Committee on Public Secondary Schools

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

Principals of member schools must report to the Committee 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 Committee'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

Teaching and Learning Standard

1   Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Commendations:

1. The leadership provided by the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations committee in the development of a collaborative process to establish a set of core values and beliefs about learning

2. The involvement of all levels of stakeholders in an inclusive process to identify their beliefs about learning and 21st century learning expectations

3. The use of 21st century research to guide the development of learning expectations

4. The display of core values, beliefs, and learning expectations throughout the building

5. The clear learning expectations

6. The commitment to a continual review and revision plan

Recommendations:

1. Identify and clarify the core values of the school in the Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations document

2. Develop and implement a process to ensure the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations

3. Develop and implement a process to ensure the review process for the school's core values , beliefs, and learning expectations is based on research, multiple data sources, as well as school and district priorities

Teaching and Learning Standard

2 **Curriculum**

Commendations:

1. The commitment to the process of curriculum development

2. The school's commitment to revise curriculum to ensure alignment with 21st century academic learning expectations

3. The widespread use of the curriculum template

4. The adoption of a common format for weekly lesson plans

5. The school's commitment to ensure the alignment of the taught and written curriculum

6. The district's commitment to K-12 curriculum development via curriculum coordinators and committees

7. The Freshman Academy's work to coordinate curriculum across academic areas

8. The commitment of the school to keep technology accessible to students

Recommendations:

1. Integrate the school's civic and social learning expectations into the curriculum

2. Complete all curriculum using the school's established common format

3. Articulate the connection between content and students' lives in and outside of school

4. Provide regular opportunities for cross-curricular coordination for all academic areas within the school

5. Provide dedicated time to address ongoing curriculum development, review and revision

6. Provide sufficient technology to implement the curriculum across all classrooms and academic areas of the building

Teaching and Learning Standard

3 **Instruction**

Commendations:

1. The data teams that analyze student performance

2. The consistent use of school-wide rubrics in all classes

3. The professional support provided by the master teachers

4. The regular extra-help sessions provided by many teachers

5. The PACE program

6. The systematic approach to timely and pertinent professional development

7. The availability of technology to enhance instruction

Recommendations:

1. Increase opportunities for student reflection on instructional practices throughout each course

2. Create formal opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning

3. Provide more differentiated instruction opportunities for students

4. Increase the use of technology to enhance the delivery of instruction

Teaching and Learning Standard

4   **Assessment of and for Student Learning**

Commendations:

1. The range of formal and informal processes for reporting individual student progress

2. The formal data team structure

3. The clear communications of student learning expectations prior to summative assessments

4. The high visibility of school-wide rubrics

5. The collaboration in creating, analyzing, and revising assessments

6. The use of common formative assessments

Recommendations:

1. Implement the new SRBI protocols to address inequities in student achievement

2. Communicate whole-school achievement of the 21st century learning expectations to the community

3. Implement a formal program for regularly and revising grading and reporting practices

4. Survey alumni to guide curricular revisions and improve instructional practice

5. Collect and examine data from post-secondary institutions to guide curricular revisions and improve instructional practice

6. Consistently provide specific, timely and corrective feedback focused on helping students revise and improve work

Support Standard

5   School Culture and Leadership

Commendations:

1. The school resource officer's Warrior program

2. The consistent commitment of school staff to connect with students in non-academic setting

3. The use of data to drive professional development needs

4. The "just in time" training model

5. The small class sizes

6. The multiple opportunities for stakeholders to be part of the decision-making process

7. The multiple modes of soliciting feedback from stakeholders

8. The continuation of the Governance Council

9. The multiple opportunities for teachers to exercise leadership

10. The multiple examples of collaboration among the school board, superintendent, and the principal

11. The autonomy that the board and superintendent afford the high school principal

12. The principal's presence and support of academic and extracurricular programs

Recommendations:

1. Revise and expand the school-wide advisory program reflects 21st century learning experiences

2. Investigate options for increasing collaboration time

3. Clarify the School Governance Council role as part of the school's decision-making bodies

4. Increase awareness for students and parents in regards to decision-making opportunities

Support Standard

6 **School Resources for Learning**

Commendations:

1. The Charger Pride and Pay it Forward Awards that recognize individual student achievement

2. The PACE program

3. The school resource officer's Judo program and support of student behavioral success

4. The introduction and implementation of Freshman Academy

5. The significant effort of support staff to make contact with parents and to keep parents/guardians informed

6. The collaboration and cooperation between school health services and Griffin Health Services

7. The collaborative work between teachers and the LMS

8. The library resources for students and staff

9. The general education tri-weekly progress reports

Recommendations:

1. Implement a written developmental guidance curriculum

2. Provide a space in which the school nurse can engage in confidential conversations

3. Elicit feedback from students, staff, and the community to improve health services

4. Ensure consistent staffing of the library and ensure the library open throughout the school day

5. Ensure that social work services are sufficient to address student needs

Support Standard

7   **Community Resources for Learning**

Commendations:

1. The school and grounds that are clean and well maintained

2. The staff who find creative ways to fund technology programs

3. The inclusive budget process

4. The dedicated work space for teachers, staff, and students

5. The frequent communication with parents

6. The wide range of AP and college credit programs

7. The open enrollment policy for all advanced courses

8. The alliance with community businesses and professional groups

Recommendations:

1. Provide dependable funding for sufficient support staff, main office classified staff and a full range of technology support along with sufficient instructional materials and supplies

2. Provide a system of documentation of maintenance and equipment replacement

3. Maintain accurate records of maintenance and equipment

4. Take appropriate steps to bring the softball field in compliance with Title IX Federal regulations

5. Create and implement a long-range plan to address enrollment changes and staffing needs

6. Develop a formal long-range plan for purchasing and maintaining equipment within the facility

7. Ensure equitable access and an appropriate number of science labs

8. Ensure a catalogue of MSDS for all chemicals in the physical plant and facilities is provided in the appropriate locations