

**New England Association of  
School and Colleges, Inc.**

**Commission on Public Schools**



**Committee on Public Secondary Schools**

**Report of the Visiting Team for  
Suffield High School**

West Suffield, CT

March 04, 2018 - March 07, 2018

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# STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

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

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

# **STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION**

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

## **Teaching and Learning Standards**

### **Core Values and Beliefs About Learning**

#### **Curriculum**

#### **Instruction**

#### **Assessment of and for Student Learning**

## **Support Standards**

### **School Culture and Leadership**

### **School Resources for Learning**

### **Community Resources for Learning**

# CORE VALUES, BELIEFS, AND LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

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## Teaching and Learning Standard

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

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

# CURRICULUM

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## Teaching and Learning Standard

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

1. The curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
2. The curriculum is written in a common format that includes:
  - units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills
  - the school's 21st century learning expectations
  - instructional strategies
  - assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success, school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics.
3. The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through:
  - inquiry and problem-solving
  - higher order thinking
  - cross-disciplinary learning
  - authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school
  - informed and ethical use of technology.
4. There is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum.
5. Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.
6. Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.
7. The district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research.

# INSTRUCTION

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## Teaching and Learning Standard

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

1. Teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.
2. Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by:
  - personalizing instruction
  - engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning
  - engaging students as active and self-directed learners
  - emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking
  - applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks
  - engaging students in self-assessment and reflection
  - integrating technology.
3. Teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by:
  - using formative assessment, especially during instructional time
  - strategically differentiating
  - purposefully organizing group learning activities
  - providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom.
4. Teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by:
  - using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments
  - examining student work
  - using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents
  - examining current research
  - engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.
5. Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices.

# ASSESSMENT OF AND FOR STUDENT LEARNING

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## Teaching and Learning Standard

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

1. The professional staff continuously employs a formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics
2. The school's professional staff communicates:
  - individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families
  - the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community.
3. Professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.
4. Prior to each unit of study, teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed.
5. Prior to summative assessments, teachers provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success, such as corresponding rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement.
6. In each unit of study, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.
7. Teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments.
8. Teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.
9. Teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.
10. Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, including all of the following:
  - student work
  - common course and common grade-level assessments
  - individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations
  - standardized assessments
  - data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions
  - survey data from current students and alumni.
11. Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's

core values and beliefs about learning.

# SCHOOL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

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## Support Standard

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

1. The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.
2. The school is equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
3. There is a formal, on-going program(s) or process(es) through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.
4. In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff:
  - engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning
  - use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices
  - dedicate formal time to implement professional development
  - apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
5. School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning.
6. The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.
7. Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students.
8. The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.
9. Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.
10. Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning.
11. The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

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

# SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

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## Support Standard

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

1. The school has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
2. The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services.
3. Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.
4. School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - deliver a written, developmental program
  - meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling
  - engage in individual and group meetings with all students
  - deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers
  - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.
5. The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - provide preventative health services and direct intervention services
  - use an appropriate referral process
  - conduct ongoing student health assessments
  - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.
6. Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum
  - provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum
  - ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school
  - are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning
  - conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.
7. Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations
  - provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students

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

# COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

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## Support Standard

***The achievement of the school's mission, core values, beliefs about 21st century learning expectations requires active community, governing board, and parent/guardian 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 community, through the district school board, sets and implements district and school policy to ensure a learning environment that supports high levels of learning for all.
3. The school community develops, plans, and funds programs to:
  - ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant
  - properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment
  - keep the school clean on a daily basis.
4. 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.
5. Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget.
6. The school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services.
7. The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal, state, and local laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.
8. The area, menus, and equipment for food services ensure that the well-being of the students is a priority and is in compliance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
9. Appropriate school transportation procedures are in place to ensure the safety of the students and in compliance with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

10. The professional staff actively engage parents/guardians and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school.
11. The school develops productive parent/guardian, community, business, and higher education partnerships that encourage mutual cooperation and good citizenship and support student learning.

# School and Community Summary

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## School and Community Summary

The town of Suffield covers an area of 43.1 square miles and is located in Hartford County in north central Connecticut. The majority of Suffield is open space and 10 percent of the land is comprised of agricultural land, woodlands and water bodies. The remaining 90 percent of the land is used for residential, commercial, industrial, and public/semi-public purposes. The town is a member of the Hartford Labor Market, the Greater Hartford Economic Development Region, and the Capitol Region Planning Area. Major geographic landmarks include the Connecticut River on Suffield's eastern boundary and the Congamond Lakes on its western boundary. The Massachusetts border is on Suffield's northern boundary and Bradley International Airport is on its southern boundary. Interstate Route 91 and Amtrak run north/south on the eastern side of the Connecticut River. Suffield is 20 miles north of Hartford and ten miles south of Springfield, Massachusetts.

Between 2000 and 2014, Suffield experienced a 15.5 percent increase in population from 13,552 to 15,657. There were 5,098 households in 2014 compared to 4,853 in 2000; a 5 percent increase. The projected population for 2020 is 16,601.

Of the 15,657 residents in 2014, 78.6 percent were white, 9 percent were black, 7 percent were Hispanic, 2 percent were Asian, and 6 percent were of other origin. Suffield's median age in 2014 was 41 compared to the state median age of 40. In 2014, 15 percent of Suffield residents were 0-14 years of age, 16 percent were 15-24, 24 percent were 25-44, 30 percent were 45-64, and 15 percent were 65 and older.

Suffield's major employers include Agri Mark Inc./ H.P. Hood and Sons Inc., Suffield Academy, Baker Nurseries, Praxair Inc., The Corrections Department, Fleming's Trucking Company and the town of Suffield. In 2015, 95.5 percent of eligible Suffield residents were employed and 4.5 percent were unemployed, compared with a Hartford County labor market unemployment rate of 5.9 percent, and a state unemployment rate of 5.7 percent.

The 2015 per capita income was \$41,104 and the median household income was \$99,707. Families with incomes below the poverty level account for 5.3 percent of the population compared with a county average of 11.9 percent and a state average of 10.5 percent. The median value of an existing home (2011-2015) was \$301,600.

Statistics for the period 2011-2015 indicate that the highest level of educational attainment for residents 25 years or older were as follows: 39.4 percent earned a bachelor's degree or higher; 8.1 percent earned an associate's degree; 18.9 percent completed some college (no degree); 25.6 percent earned a high school diploma; and 7.9 percent did not earn a high school diploma.

The town has four public schools. Spaulding School serves grades K-2, McAlister Intermediate School serves grades 3-5, and Suffield Middle School serves grades 6-8. Built in 2002, Suffield High School serves grades 9-12. The per pupil expenditure in the town of Suffield in 2017-2018 was \$16,049. Education accounts for approximately 66 percent of the town's expenditures.

In January, 2018, Suffield High School had a total school enrollment of 793 students. There were 207 freshmen, 187 sophomores, 217 juniors, and 182 seniors. The racial breakdown of the student population is 88.6 percent white, 3.2 percent Asian, 3 percent black, and 4.9 percent Hispanic. The school population is expected to decrease over the next five-year period.

The Suffield Regional Agricultural Center is a component of Suffield High School. The area served by the Agriscience Center includes the towns of Suffield, Avon, Canton, East Granby, East Windsor, Hartland, Enfield, Granby, Hartford, Simsbury, and Windsor Locks. The agriscience program is designed to assist in exploring career opportunities in agriscience and agribusiness. Upon graduation from this program, students may be prepared for direct job placement or to enter fields of study in biogenetics, agricultural sales, forestry, aquaculture, equine management, veterinary science, and plant and animal production. Of the total school

enrollment of 793, 51 agriscience students were Suffield residents and 91 agriscience students were non-residents. The majority of non-residents in the program this year are from the towns of Enfield and Windsor Locks (31 and 24 percent respectively).

Suffield Academy, an independent college preparatory school for about 400 students, is located on over 300 acres in the center of Suffield. Approximately 20 to 25 percent of the students are day students from the surrounding areas. Approximately 5 to 10 percent of each class chooses to attend Suffield Academy instead of attending Suffield High School. This number fluctuates year to year, and there are approximately 45 Suffield high school-aged residents attending Suffield Academy.

Suffield students have consistently scored above state and national averages in common assessments such as PSAT, SAT, and AP testing. In 2016, the average score for Suffield students was 536 in reading, 529 in writing, and 554 in mathematics. Advanced Placement courses (AP) are offered in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, AB Calculus, BC Calculus, Statistics, Computer Science, English Language, English Literature, French Language, Spanish Language, Spanish Literature, United States History, United States Government, Psychology, Macroeconomics and Microeconomics. In May 2016, 170 students took a total of 348 examinations in 16 subjects. Of the 348 AP examinations taken by Suffield High School, students 85.6 percent received scores of 3 or higher.

Students are able to participate in the Tech Prep program, offered in cooperation with Asnuntuck Community College. Students also take advantage of the opportunity to attend the Greater Hartford Academy for the Performing Arts and the Greater Hartford Academy for Math and Science. Students can also earn college credits in partnership programs with Asnuntuck Community College and the University of Connecticut (Early College Experience in English Literature).

More than 479 students participated in at least one of the 45 varsity, junior varsity, freshman or club sports offered through the athletic program. This is approximately 60 percent of the student body. The percentage of students involved in extracurricular activities at the high school increases well over 60 percent of the student body when accounting for the many students who participate in at least one of over 20 clubs and activities that are offered at Suffield High School, including Giraffe Club, Interact Club, Yearbook, FFA, First Robotics, Band, Jazz Ensemble, Drama Club, Class Councils, Student Senate, Best Buddies, GSA, Debate Team, Academic Quiz Team and WSHS-TV crew. Suffield High School students also participate in a wide range of volunteer community service activities in their community such as recreation coaching, Relay for Life, Ronald McDonald House, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4H, and Suffield Police Explorers and ambulance association.

Parents/guardians participate in the life of the school through the Parent Advisory Council, Safe Parties Committee, Suffield FFA Alumni and Friends' Organization, athletic and music boosters, Suffield Foundation for Excellent Schools, and by serving as volunteers in a number of different capacities. Parents/guardians and members of the community attend many school activities and athletic events.

Suffield High School students benefit each year from the significant contributions of time and financial support from individual benefactors, businesses, and private, professional, and fraternal organizations, that provide scholarships and awards and sponsor special school events. Student academic and athletic successes are recognized at sports awards nights, FFA banquet and degree ceremonies, undergraduate awards night, senior banquet and graduation. An annual scholar's breakfast is sponsored by the First National Bank of Suffield and the Suffield Rotary Club sponsors a Distinguished Rotary Student of the Month recognition program.

Statistics for the class of 2016 indicate that 70 percent of the school's graduates entered four-year colleges, 19 percent entered two-year colleges, 2 percent attended other post-secondary schools, 1 percent entered the military, and 8 percent sought employment.

## **Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations**

## **Mission Statement of the District and School**

The Mission of the Suffield Public Schools is to prepare all students with the knowledge, skills and attributes required for success in a rapidly changing world.

In pursuit of this Mission, we believe that:

- when we address students' diverse academic, social, emotional, and physical needs, all will learn;
- all students need equitable access to appropriate resources and opportunities to excel;
- multiple measures of student learning are required to drive continuous improvement;
- students and adults thrive in a safe and secure learning environment characterized by responsibility, fairness, respect and civility;
- highly effective teachers and instructional leaders who engage students in rigorous and challenging experiences are the keys to student success;
- an excellent District staff supports success in every classroom, facility, and setting;
- partnerships, collaboration and communication with families and the community are vital to our mission.

## **Core Values**

As a collective learning community, Suffield High School values opportunities to strengthen and develop:

- Responsibility
- Respect
- Creativity
- Integrity
- Rigor

## **Beliefs about Learning**

The Suffield High School community believes that the potential for student learning is maximized when:

- all members of the community feel safe.
- good character and integrity are promoted.
- creativity and innovation are encouraged.
- effective communication skills are developed.
- collaboration opportunities consistently occur.
- the ability to think critically in order to solve problems is fostered.
- a rich and rigorous academic program is provided.
- learning opportunities are active and engaging.
- 21st century skills are taught across the disciplines to help students succeed.
- technology is used appropriately and effectively.

# Introduction

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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 Committee on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI), and the Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools (CPEMS), and the Commission on International Education (CIE).

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

### **Teaching and Learning Standards**

- Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

- Curriculum

- Instruction

- Assessment of and for Student Learning

### **Support of Teaching and Learning Standards**

- School Culture and Leadership

- School Resources for Learning

- Community Resources for Learning

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

### **Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Study**

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Suffield High School, a committee of eight members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people. In addition to faculty members, the self-study committees included teachers and administrators.

The self-study of Suffield High School School extended over a period of 10 school months from January 2017 to January 2018.

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

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

### **The Process Used by the Visiting Team**

A visiting team of 16 members was assigned by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Suffield High School. The visiting team members spent three days in Suffield, 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 aligns with the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. Since the members of the visiting team represented classroom teachers, school counselors, library/media specialists, school administrators, school board members, and central office administrators, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Suffield High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- two hours shadowing 16 students
- a total of 67 classroom observations
- 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

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

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

# Standard 1 Indicator 1

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## Conclusions

The Suffield High School (SHS) community has engaged in a collaborative and inclusive process, informed by current research-based practices, to identify its core value and beliefs about learning, but has not yet engaged in a process to clearly define the core values and beliefs in order to ensure commitment throughout the entire learning community. In order to develop the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, the NEASC steering committee reviewed current research, including the Partnership for 21st Century Learning and Preparing 21st Century Students for a Global Society. In addition, research on area schools was performed to gain an understanding of other approaches to core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. In February 2016 the full faculty worked to develop a word list of expectations, hopes for students, and the high school's strongest values. From this list, a master list was compiled by the NEASC steering committee. Feedback was solicited from the student senate and the full student body through a core value survey during advisory. Parents were able to give input through the parent advisory council. The steering committee narrowed the master list into categories which were used to establish the five core values of "creativity, integrity, respect, responsibility, and rigor." This list was voted on and approved by the full faculty and board of education in May 2016. Using these five core values, the faculty drafted the school's beliefs about learning which were also approved through full faculty vote. Rubrics were then created for each 21st century learning expectation by interdisciplinary faculty groups, who were each assigned one of the expectations. Teachers reported feeling that their input was heard and valued during this entire process. Students agreed that they had a voice in the creation of the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.

While the process to develop the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations was inclusive, there is not yet broad-based understanding of or commitment to these fundamental values. For example, students are unable to articulate the meaning of the core values and teachers report that different interpretations of the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations exist. This variety of interpretations challenged the success of the school-wide rubric pilot during the 2016-2017 school year. The school leadership team was prepared to investigate student portfolios as an alternative to school-wide rubrics, demonstrating the lack of school-wide commitment to rubrics for measuring the core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations. When the school engages all stakeholders in defining the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, there will be wider commitment to and implementation of these values throughout the school community.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

# Standard 1 Indicator 2

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## Conclusions

Suffield High School has identified 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies, but has yet to define specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement. The faculty of SHS have developed and voted to implement the 5-C's for 21st century learning expectations (communication, collaboration, citizenship, creativity and critical thinking). The staff, in small interdisciplinary groups, created rubrics without expert guidance on how to define and measure each expectation. Sixty-six percent of staff think the school's 21st century learning expectations are challenging and measurable for all students. Yet, in spring 2017, the faculty piloted the new rubrics but felt the rubrics were unmeasurable and not universally applicable across all disciplines. Each analytic rubric describes desired student outcomes in inconsistent and vague terms across all expectations. This is indicated by the fact that only approximately 45 percent of staff believe that the school has adopted school-wide analytic rubrics that define all of the 21st century learning expectations (academic, social, and civic). Currently, each department is using individual scoring guides and rubrics, some of which were implemented during the previous NEASC evaluation. Many of their individual and department scoring guides address and assess many of the expectations, although not by design.

In an effort to provide feedback about the core values to parents and students, the administration created and added core value report card comments. Limited communication on how these values were defined and evaluated led to confusion on the part of students, parents, teachers, and school board members. The school is planning on obtaining information from NEASC exemplar schools as part of its revision of school-wide 21st century learning expectations rubrics in order to modify existing rubrics so that they are accessible and usable to all members of the learning community. When the SHS community develops a strategic plan to define expectations, revise rubrics, and incorporate the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, these values will become more tightly woven into the fabric of the school community.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- school board
- department leaders
- Endicott survey

# Standard 1 Indicator 3

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## Conclusions

The school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are in the beginning stages of being reflected in the culture of the school, driving curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, as well as guiding the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations.

The SHS core values and beliefs are closely aligned with the district's core beliefs and common language as evidenced in both the Suffield District and High School Improvement Plans. Both district and school share the same Five-Year Strategic Goals for 2012-2017 to create an aligned and accessible curriculum that embeds 21st century skills and Common Core State Standards. The school board formally adopted the core values on May 3, 2016.

The school has a set of written core values and beliefs that are visible on banners in the main hallway of the school. The core values are posted in every classroom and on the school's website. Eighty-five percent of students and 76 percent of parents are familiar with core values and beliefs. One example of the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations being exhibited in the school is through the interdisciplinary sportsmanship initiative. The athletic director gathered captains of athletic teams, in collaboration with the Teen Leadership class, to create a good sportsmanship presentation for athletic captains from multiple area high schools. The school is also a recent recipient of the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference Michael's Cup for sportsmanship. Additionally, the agricultural science program develops and implements lessons which emphasize holding students accountable to a code of ethics. This code of ethics is independent of the school's core values and beliefs but the agricultural science department head believes them to be similar in spirit. Despite this data and the visibility of the core values and beliefs posted throughout the building, students, faculty, and parents had limited ability to state in general terms how these values and beliefs directly impacted the teaching and learning at SHS. Only about 53 percent of staff feel that the core values and beliefs are actively reflected in the school's culture. Many students do not know all of the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, and some students report that they know the words, but do not really understand what the school means by them. Over 75 percent of staff agree core values, beliefs, and learning expectations are clear to them, although both teachers and students report that the core values are not yet lived in a school-wide sense. The faculty recognition and Core Values Awards are beginning to incorporate the school's core values and beliefs into everyday culture. For the faculty award, faculty peer nominations are considered by the student senate, who selects a winner. For the Core Values Award, each department nominates a student for each value and forwards the nominations to the school climate committee, who selects one student from each grade per value to award. However, the nominations are only occasionally accompanied by justifications for each student, and some students report that although they are aware of the Core Values and Beliefs Award, they are not sure how students are chosen for the award.

The assistant superintendent reports that the 21st century skills development and implementation are in their infancy stages. Students reported that some teachers make a purposeful effort to teach the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, but students have yet to internalize these lessons.

Only about 47 percent of staff agree that the core values and beliefs guide school procedures and the allocation of resources. The assistant superintendent reports that the school has increased the amount of PLC time so that teachers may collaborate more on aligning their practices with the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.

Once there is school-wide commitment and a deeper, consistent application of the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations within the faculty and staff at Suffield High School, this commitment will drive curriculum, instruction, assessment, and guide policies, procedures, decision-making, and resource allocation.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

# Standard 1 Indicator 4

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## Conclusions

Suffield High School will review and revise its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as on district and school community priorities. The SHS leadership has begun to discuss the future direction of core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, but the timeline and plan for review and revision has yet to be fully developed. The leadership team, with an eye toward future changes in NEASC expectations, has begun to visit neighboring schools to collect information on best practices in creating a vision of a graduate. The school is considering annual portfolios as a possible replacement to school-wide rubrics to assess students on the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations in the future, however, further discussion has led the leadership team toward the exploration of schools who have exemplary school-wide rubric systems. Next steps include reaching out to NEASC for a list of exemplar schools and re-evaluating the implementation and process of the school-wide rubric system.

Faculty members involved in PDEC (professional development and evaluation committee) work to plan professional development around instructional improvements. District PLC time is often used as collaboration time between department and like-course teachers. The district superintendent, assistant superintendent, curriculum leaders and curriculum chairs often join teacher PLC time in an effort to align and assist staff with implementation, instruction, and assessment of core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Some teacher voiced that the continuation of this time and multiple stakeholder collaboration could be used to review and revise curriculum, instruction and assessment using the core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations. Central office is working to have staff create, revise, and convert curriculum to Rubicon Atlas by the end of 2019, with the goal of aligning curriculum with 21st century learning expectations. When the school conducts a review of core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations on a regular basis, including input from all school stakeholders, based on sound research and multiple data sources, SHS's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations will continue to be progressive, meaningful, and relevant.

## Sources of Evidence

- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school website

# Standard 1 Commendations

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## Commendation

The inclusive process used to develop the school's core values and beliefs which incorporated feedback from a variety of school stakeholders

## Commendation

The incorporation of the core values into the school website and School Improvement Plan

## Commendation

The efforts to embed the core values and beliefs in the culture of the school through programs such as the Core Values Awards and sportsmanship program

## Commendation

The high visibility of the core values banners in the main hallway

# Standard 1 Recommendations

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## Recommendation

Engage school stakeholders in a process to clearly define the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations in order to ensure commitment throughout the entire learning community

## Recommendation

Develop and implement specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement for each learning expectation

## Recommendation

Allocate time for professional development to integrate the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations into curriculum, instruction, and assessment

## Recommendation

Develop and implement a process to review and revise an authentic and research-based core values and beliefs statement

## Recommendation

Investigate schools that successfully implement a school-wide analytic rubric system

# Standard 2 Indicator 1

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## Conclusions

A substantial amount of the curricula at Suffield High School are not yet purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Although, 50 percent of staff agrees that the school's formal curriculum design ensures that all students practice and achieve all of the school's learning expectations, departments across the school are in various stages of developing the curriculum. Some have written or are in the process of writing common formative and summative assessments, others are in the process of transferring current curricula into Rubicon Atlas, and some have yet to begin the curriculum writing process. As a result, the curriculum for different courses within departments are at varying levels of completion. The school has not yet aligned specific school-wide 21st century learning expectations with course and department curricula. There is limited consistency in awareness and understanding of 21st century learning expectations throughout the school. These learning expectations are not yet consistently found in the departmental scoring guides and common assessments. School leadership acknowledges that the development and consistency of rubrics is in its earliest stages. Due to identified time constraints, little formal data review takes place for making decisions to add or delete courses or units from the curriculum or for the purpose of modifying curriculum, except by individual teachers. When the curricula have been fully revised to implement the new expectations, including common understanding and assessment of 21st century learning expectations, all students will have full opportunities to practice and achieve mastery of each of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

# Standard 2 Indicator 2

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## Conclusions

Suffield High School's curriculum is in the beginning stages of being written and stored in a common format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, instructional strategies, and assessment practices, however, the school's 21st century learning expectations are not included in the current format.

Rubicon Atlas, Google Docs, and printed binders are all methods of cataloguing the information, but some are ineffective or inaccessible to all department members. The school is in a transitional phase in which all curriculum documents will be transferred to Rubicon Atlas. Some of the curriculum is in varied written components. Other curricula is in various developmental stages in Rubicon Atlas, utilizing a common template and format. A few courses are taught without any written curriculum. Only 27 percent of the staff agree that the curriculum is written in a common, formal template. Curriculum documents do not indicate articulation of alignment with 21st century learning expectations. Some departments are comprehensive in their inclusion of instructional strategies and assessment practices, while other departments are still engaged in the process of solidifying their curricula. Specific instructional practices for meeting these standards were not made available in the evidence provided by all departments. Explicitly identified common assessments and the specific school-wide rubrics used in the scoring of assessments are absent from most documents. Various departments and individual teachers within a department use scoring guides that provide points earned. Department heads and leadership recognize that the work of writing and aligning curriculum to teaching and assessment is, by nature, an ongoing process and cite the lack of common planning time coupled with the prior lack of a district-wide process as a challenge in making progress in recent years. Central office leadership has articulated a plan for all curriculum to be in Rubicon Atlas by July 2019. However, the implementation of the plan has been inconsistent. Currently, administration reports that 21 percent of the courses taught have no written curriculum, 42 percent of courses taught have curriculum entered into Rubicon Atlas, and 60 percent of the courses taught have written curriculum. Further review of the curricula written in Rubicon Atlas, showed significantly more than 42 percent being incomplete and/or missing entirely. For example, the science department has completed all components in Rubicon Atlas.

When a common template is used consistently among all departments for the purpose of curriculum formatting, and when a clearly articulated curriculum revision cycle/process is developed and consistently implemented, students and teachers will have a clear understanding of the school's curriculum and how the school's 21st century learning expectations can be achieved.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

# Standard 2 Indicator 3

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## Conclusions

The SHS curriculum occasionally encourages students to pursue a depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem-solving, higher order thinking, authentic learning opportunities in and out of school, informed and ethical use of technology, and encourages informal cross-disciplinary learning.

Classroom observations indicate that some students in specific courses and/or departments are provided with opportunities for practicing inquiry and problem-solving, in absence of this being specifically outlined in curriculum documents. This type of teaching and learning is inconsistent among and between departments, classes, and levels. Seventy-seven percent of parents, and 87 percent of staff members agree that the curriculum at SHS emphasizes depth of understanding and higher order thinking.

SHS acknowledges that cross-disciplinary learning is prevalent, although mostly informal and inconsistent. Sixty-five percent of students and approximately 47 percent of staff believe that the school places an emphasis on these types of learning opportunities. Curriculum documents make limited connections from one content area to another. Teachers and students provide only anecdotal, informal examples of when this takes place at the school. Some teachers reported that Wildcat Time occurring daily and a lack of common planning time were noted as barriers, although teachers have over four hours of planning time each week.

Approximately 66 percent of parents, and approximately 78 percent of teachers indicate that the curriculum emphasizes authentic application of knowledge and skills. Approximately 51 percent of students report that they have an opportunity to apply what they are learning outside of the classroom. Sixty-five percent of students feel that what they learn in classes is applicable to other courses and to life outside of the school, while approximately 54 percent of students report that their teachers include topics from other subject areas in their classes. This is significantly present in agriscience classes, for example in food science and bread lab.

Approximately 89 percent of students report to be knowledgeable about the effective and ethical use of technology, and approximately 77 percent of parents think their children are learning about ethical use of technology. The school is a 1:1 Chromebook environment, utilizing various programs and software, particular to individual classes. Turnitin.com is used to check for plagiarism prior to submitting an assignment. School-wide assemblies have been used to remind students about what is and is not acceptable related to Internet safety.

When there are consistent and widespread opportunities for students to apply inquiry, problem-solving and higher order thinking skills, to experience cross-curricular and authentic learning opportunities, and to demonstrate the informed and ethical use of technology, students are able to demonstrate a depth of understanding and application of knowledge that assist them in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey

# Standard 2 Indicator 4

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## Conclusions

There is minimal alignment between written and taught curricula at Suffield High School. Approximately 57 percent of the staff agrees that the written and taught curricula are aligned. Further, review indicates that less than 50 percent of the curriculum is written and complete in Rubicon Atlas. Across the school, teachers rarely post learning targets which are inconsistently included in curricula. There is weekly formal allocation of time for collaboration, however, this allocated time is used inconsistently throughout the school depending on the leadership within the department. Many teachers collaborate informally and share curriculum resources in support of the written curriculum and/or the taught curriculum, but not necessarily concurrent with the same teachers and the same courses. Many teachers and curriculum leaders indicate making revisions to curriculum documents in absence of board of education approval. The board of education reports its role is to approve all curriculum that is written and taught. When the high school's written and taught curricula are fully aligned, students are assured equitable opportunities for practicing and mastering SHS' 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- school board
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey

# Standard 2 Indicator 5

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## Conclusions

Effective curricular coordination is evident within some departments, with limited consistency within the school as well as with sending schools in the district. SHS has inconsistent curricular coordination and vertical articulation with all sending schools and levels within the district. Although within the school there is some curricular coordination and articulation; grades 6-12 curriculum leaders, specifically, provide coordination and vertical alignment in the areas of English, math, social studies and science. Weekly meetings between content leaders at the middle school and high school occur to review and evaluate curriculum. Monthly meetings with the curriculum leaders and central office administration occur to monitor curricular coordination and vertical articulation. Limited usage and monitoring of the district curriculum repository (Rubicon Atlas) by administration provides sporadic evidence of effective coordination and vertical articulation. Some use of professional development days has provided teachers, under the facilitation of the curriculum leaders, time and opportunities to work on curriculum alignment and coordination. For example, teachers report that some departments are not permitted to coordinate their curriculum without the presence of their curriculum leader while other department have autonomy to do curriculum work with or without the presence of the curriculum leader. A few teachers reported that central office engagement and involvement in curriculum coordination is limited. Other teachers reported that curriculum coordination cannot be done, as indicated by central office administration, through the use of release time limiting the accessibility of all staff to be involved in curriculum coordination. When effective curricular coordination exists within and among all academic areas within the school as well as with the sending schools in the district, in alignment with the district's improvement plan and effective monitoring of curriculum leaders, students have the best chance of meeting 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey

# Standard 2 Indicator 6

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## Conclusions

Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are generally sufficient to support SHS' ability to fully implement the curriculum.

Approximately 46 percent of staff report that they have sufficient instructional materials to implement the curriculum. Sixty percent of staff report that the facilities fully support the implementation of curriculum. Approximately 82 percent of the students report that SHS provides the instructional materials needed in each course. There is a wide variety of technology available to students and teachers, including the district's 1:1 Chromebook initiatives. Projection devices are present in most learning spaces. Teachers report a need for interactive whiteboards as a technology resource to deliver instruction. Limited professional development on integration of technology, and the elimination of the technology integration position has stalled this teacher growth opportunity, leading to limited student growth. Data privacy laws, effective July 2018, have prevented moving forward with meaningful, integration of technology, as reported by administration.

Curriculum leaders and department chairpersons are seeking new ways to connect students to resources and access to library media integration. The world languages department reported that larger class sizes beyond that of SHS' average has impacted their instruction. The use of a world languages teacher as a part-time curriculum leader, reducing classroom teacher responsibilities, has increased class sizes within the department. The science department has adequate allocations of resources to deliver the curriculum to all students.

When staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources are sufficient across all departments to support the school's ability to fully implement the curriculum, including co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities, SHS students will have access to a well-rounded educational experience inside and outside the classroom.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- community members
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey

# Standard 2 Indicator 7

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## Conclusions

The district is in the beginning stages of providing the professional staff with consistent personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research.

Sixty-five percent of staff is involved in curriculum review and revision. Only 21 percent of teachers agree that they have time to formally review, evaluate and revise curricula. Budget documents indicate sufficient allocation of funds, with minimal actual expenditures for curriculum development. Over the past two years, central office has designed a curriculum matrix and a district-wide template (Rubicon Atlas). The district does not have a formal curriculum review cycle, however, specific curriculum components are planned for review within the next five years. The district has invested professional development monies, however expenditures in this line item are minimal toward building staff capacity for curriculum development. Central office has recognized that the curriculum database (Rubicon Atlas) is to be used as the district curriculum template. The district has recently hired grades 6-12 curriculum leaders in science, social studies, English, math, and a part-time curriculum leader in world languages. Sixty-three percent of teachers indicate the lack of accessibility to a curriculum leader in guiding the collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum. The district provides funding for summer curriculum writing varied among departments, however, volunteers for this work are limited due to a lack of willingness or ability in some departments. The district curriculum matrix lacks alignment with the funding and budget line items specific to curriculum writing and development. Some departments use national and state standards in the development of curriculum. There is little evidence of any current research of best practices embedded into curriculum evaluation, analysis and revision across all content areas. A few district universal screening assessments (STAR, i-Ready) are sporadically used to consider revisions to the curriculum.

When the Suffield School District devotes adequate personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum, students' abilities to practice and achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations will be enhanced.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey

# Standard 2 Commendations

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## Commendation

The common curriculum template that has been implemented through the adoption of Rubicon Atlas

## Commendation

The allocation of instructional materials and supplies

# Standard 2 Recommendations

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## Recommendation

Review, revise, and design curricula to ensure all students meet the school's 21st century learning expectations

## Recommendation

Revise and write curricula, in alignment with a coherent district plan, in a common format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts and skills, the school's 21st century learning expectations, instructional strategies, and assessment practices including use of school-wide rubrics

## Recommendation

Increase opportunities for students to experience authentic learning opportunities

## Recommendation

Align the written and taught curriculum based on the district plan

## Recommendation

Provide specific opportunities to coordinate vertical articulation across all academic areas

## Recommendation

Develop and implement a formal curriculum draft and revision cycle

## Recommendation

Provide time and resources for faculty to review, revise, and write curriculum

# Standard 3 Indicator 1

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## Conclusions

Teachers' instructional practices are occasionally examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. Just over 54 percent of teachers report that they continuously examine their instructional practices to ensure consistency with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. Teachers' instruction reflected core values and 21st century learning expectations in 75 percent of classroom observations. Teachers' instruction reflected a connection to school-wide expectations 43 percent of the time. Several teachers indicated that they actively seek ways to integrate instruction that addresses the beliefs about learning. Teachers report that recent PLC and PD time has been focused on writing and revising curriculum and common assessments, and the opportunity to share and discuss instructional strategies at department meetings and faculty meetings exists. Some teachers avail themselves of the opportunity to participate in an informal instructional rounds process through which they maintain a learning log for peer-based coaching. Students indicated that they are largely unfamiliar with the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, so they are not certain whether their teachers' instruction supports core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. When the school fully implements the 21st century learning expectations, there will be a clearer connection between instructional practices and Suffield High School's core values and beliefs.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

# Standard 3 Indicator 2

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## Conclusions

In most areas there is evidence of teachers' instructional practices supporting 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; and integrating technology.

Approximately 29 percent of students believe their teachers personalize instruction, and nearly 64 percent of students indicate they are given opportunities to choose topics based on their interests. Choice of topic based on interest is evident in student work samples in English, agriscience and technology, social studies, visual arts, and applied arts. Nearly 61 percent of parents and 90 percent of teachers report that teachers personalize instruction to support the achievement of the school's learning expectations. Personalization was observed in nearly half of 65 classes visited. Anecdotal evidence of personalization includes accommodation of student prior experience and interest in agriscience to determine appropriate Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) placements and a quarterly project completed by seniors that allows students to select their own topics as well as to define the scope of their research. The addition of the Wildcat Time, three hours a week of advisory/intervention, affords teachers an additional opportunity to meet regularly with individuals or small groups of students to address their learning needs.

There is evidence of students engaging in cross-disciplinary learning. English and social studies teachers report collaboration linking literature read in English to thematic study in social studies. Agriscience teachers report ongoing collaboration with both science and personal finance. Students report cross-disciplinary links in conjunction with quarterly projects in senior English, links which include biology, psychology, and life ed. Cross-disciplinary learning also occurs between integrated science and world history, both freshman requirements. The opportunity for departmental teacher collaboration exists in the 40 minutes of shared preparation time a week. Essential questions and learning objectives are used to varying degrees but are consistently present in AP and UConn ECE courses. Students report that essential questions are regularly posted in some content areas, such as social studies, and are referred to throughout instructional activities and discussion. Students also report that some teachers post or reference "big ideas" and connect them to unit content.

Active learning was observed in 81.5 percent of classrooms. Evidence of active learning in classroom observations and student work samples included, but was not limited to, students working collaboratively to establish and support a claim; students working independently to develop a problem-solving strategy; students working in pairs to create presentations in a target language; students shaping and smoothing coil vessels in ceramics; students physically constructing sets on the stage; students rehearsing in small ensembles in instrumental music, and students participating in student-led discussions.

More than 87 percent of teachers report emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving and higher order thinking, and nearly 70 percent of parents agree that teachers emphasize those skills. In 65 observed classes, learning activities on the low end of Bloom's Taxonomy were seen 25.4 percent of the time and learning activities in the middle and higher of Bloom's Taxonomy were observed 74.6 percent of the time. In an AP Spanish and Honors Spanish 6 combined class, students are responsible for interpreting authentic Spanish poetry and teaching that content to their classmates. In Introduction to Engineering, students designed and built CO2 cars. In a freshman integrated science class, students were presented with pictures and were asked to use previous knowledge to investigate and determine how bottled water contributed to the destruction of the environment.

Fifty-one percent of students indicate they have the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills to authentic tasks outside the classroom. Students perform or exhibit work for outside audiences in choral, instrumental music, dramatic and visual arts programs. Student art is widely displayed around the school. Culinary students prepare food for events beyond their classroom, such as for the Scholars Breakfast, and floral art students create arrangements for a public holiday bazaar, school events as well as teach courses to community members about

floral arrangement. AgriScience students are responsible for completing Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAEs), which entail application of classroom skills in authentic agricultural settings. Child development students run a preschool for local toddlers. Students participate in a Model United Nations program, and others record a live morning announcement video for public viewing. Students enrolled in Materials I and Materials II, as well as interior design and architectural design, utilize online software platforms as well as Computer-Aided Design (CAD) principles that are applicable in the field.

Nearly 64 percent of students report that teachers engage them in self-assessment with some frequency. Student work samples indicate student self-reflection in some content areas, including agriscience, social studies, science, English, and music. Self-assessment varies in form but includes narrative responses to guiding questions, verification of student responses with a posted answer guide, assigning themselves points based upon an articulated scoring guide, circling indicators on an analytical rubric before submitting it for teacher review, and submitting written work to turnitin.com to check and potentially correct paraphrasing.

Suffield High School has a 1:1 technology program through which all students have access to Chromebooks, an indication that teachers are expected to use technology to enhance instruction. Nearly 92 percent of students indicate that teachers ask them to use technology in their assignments. Teachers report a desire for additional professional development around integration of technology. Teachers describe common use of Google Apps for Education, particularly Google Classroom, as well as Turnitin.com, Kahoot, Khan Academy, Pear Deck, YouTube, PowerPoint, PHET, Gizmo, Haiku Learning, AET (for recording of agriscience SAE progress), and more. Students in grades 9-12 have access to a Carl D. Perkins grant-funded design studio.

When teachers consistently personalize instruction, engage students in cross-disciplinary learning, engage students as self-directed learners, integrate technology, and implement lessons that promote inquiry, problem-solving, higher order thinking, application of knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, and promote self-assessment, the instructional practices will support all students' achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

# Standard 3 Indicator 3

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## Conclusions

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

Anecdotal evidence of the use of formative assessment exists. Students describe check-in procedures used by teachers, including circulation of the room, physical measures like "thumbs up-thumbs down" or "fist to five", and the use of exit tickets that allow teachers to gauge student progress toward mastery of skills or content and, if necessary, to adjust instruction for the following lesson. The commonly employed learning activities that could be considered formative include apps like Socrative, Mentimeter, Edpuzzle, Pear Deck, and Kahoot. Suffield High School has a retake policy that lends a formative nature to many assessments.

Nearly 89 percent of teachers indicate they use differentiated instructional practices to meet the learning needs of all students. Differentiation varies by content and level. Data from i-Ready drives differentiation in the math intervention class. In English classes, students have choice of texts around a common theme. Supports, such as audio books, guided notes, modified assessments, graphic organizers, and scaffolded rubrics, are also utilized by teachers. Slightly fewer than 60 percent of students indicate their teachers use a variety of teaching strategies.

Nearly 89 percent of teachers state they use group activities; some teachers were observed using group activities during classroom visits. Nearly 85 percent of students indicate they use group activities in their classes, and this was confirmed in student panel discussions. Observed examples of group work included partner presentations in world languages, partners working to establish and support a claim using a variety of sources in English, forensics students collaborating to examine evidence and draw conclusions about a crime, geometry students problem solving in small groups at the white board, and psychology students engaging in small group discussions about case studies. In Unified Physical Education class, students were paired up to play floor hockey. Teachers noted that in some cases, they allowed students to establish their own collaborative groups, but that in other cases, they purposefully grouped students, based upon a variety of factors, including academic aptitude, behavior, and interpersonal compatibility.

More than 36 percent of students report teachers spend one-on-one time with them, and more than 77 percent of parents say teachers provide additional support for students when needed. This was directly observed in personal finance, social studies, and in the mathematics intervention; it was also described by teachers across all content areas who offer supports to students with varying abilities. Wildcat Time provides a setting for teachers to offer additional support to students during the school day, but outside of the regular class meeting time. Students cited Wildcat Time as a strength of the school, noting that it was helpful to be able to make up missed work, prep for upcoming assessments, or receive additional instruction during the school day rather than after school.

Because teachers use formative assessment to inform and differentiate instruction and provide additional supports and alternative strategies within the classroom, the school ensures that they meet the needs of all students.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey

# Standard 3 Indicator 4

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## Conclusions

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

Nearly 83 percent of teachers indicate they use formative and summative assessments to improve instructional practice. Departmental colleagues share 40 minutes a week of PLC time. PLC groupings were assigned by school leadership and are determined by shared course assignment. Teachers and curriculum leaders report that PLC time is used, in part, for review of student assessment results and data. The district improvement plan cites SAT and ACT data as indicators to be examined for student success; there is evidence that the mathematics and English departments are beginning to access those data sets. While there is evidence of teachers collaborating within departments to improve their instructional practices by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments and examining student work, there is not currently a focus on examining student work from across disciplines.

Fewer than 20 percent of parents report having been asked by teachers for feedback to make adjustments in their practice. Teachers note that a school-wide effort to make more frequent communication with parents has increased two-way communication. Five, half-day sessions of parent-teacher conferences in November were reported to be well-attended. Parents and students provide feedback on an annual school climate survey, commonly referred to as the Panorama Survey, after the delivery platform. Nearly 40 percent of students report that teachers ask for feedback to improve their instructional practices. This most commonly occurs when some teachers solicit feedback from students through anonymous, end-of-course surveys. Students were also invited to a faculty meeting and matched up with departments to provide feedback about what types of instructional activities were most successful, and that feedback was used to inform future professional development. Departmental and faculty meeting time is periodically dedicated to providing time for teachers to share and discuss instructional improvement. Teachers report that they feel welcome to share their own expertise and ideas about instruction, occasionally reporting out at faculty or department meetings to demonstrate ways to utilize technology or learning activities. The teacher evaluation process is another vehicle for feedback, as evaluators provide ratings and rubric-based comments to teachers, who indicate the process is generally positive.

District administrators attended multiple days of a Fullan Conference over the last few years, read and had conversations related to the work in books such as *Focus* by Mike Schmoker, *The Advantage* by Patrick Lencioni, and *Visible Learning for Teachers* by John Hattie. The district is also contracted with an educational consulting firm called District Management Group. School administrators periodically share articles with faculty members about educational topics relevant to their practices and professional development. Teachers in the English department engage in book studies on a variety of topics, such as vocabulary instruction and grammar. In the world languages department, teachers who attend conferences such as ACTFL return to share out the information gained to their colleagues.

More than 68 percent of teachers report they improve their instructional practices by engaging in formal opportunities for professional discourse focused on instructional practices. In science, a department member is a part of a statewide curriculum consortium that is addressing inclusion of Next Generation Science Standards, and the agriscience department head participates in monthly department head meetings with leaders from all 19 agriscience centers in the state. Teachers and curricular chairpersons focus on instructional methods as part of their collaborative work within classrooms.

When teachers, individually and collaboratively, use student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments; regularly examine student work; use feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents; and engage in professional discourse focused on instructional practice, they will improve their instructional practices.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

# Standard 3 Indicator 5

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## Conclusions

There is evidence that teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices. Roughly 80 percent of students perceive that their teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach and this was supported by students. More than 91 percent of teachers report that they maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices. Teachers also maintain expertise through membership in professional organizations and through the continuation of their education. All teachers are required to attain a master's degree, and the district provides some reimbursement for higher education. Thirty-two teachers have accrued credits in excess of their master's degree. Some teacher leaders attend workshops at the state level, including agriscience and science. Other teachers engage in content-specific summer work, such as a course on welding, or work with professionals in their content area to expand their knowledge and improve curriculum. Fifteen SHS teachers are certified by College Board to teach AP courses, seven teachers are approved by UCONN to teach Early College Experience (ECE) courses with two more in the process, and six teachers are approved by Asnuntuck Community College to teach dual enrollment College/Career Partnership courses. When teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices, students benefit from having knowledgeable and effective teachers.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey

# Standard 3 Commendations

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## Commendation

The informal opportunities for teachers to share and discuss instructional strategies

## Commendation

The opportunities provided for students to demonstrate authentic learning in a variety of content areas

## Commendation

The creation of Wildcat Time that provides academic and behavioral support to students

## Commendation

The opportunities provided for students to participate in collaborative or group learning in a variety of content areas

## Commendation

The PLC model that provides opportunities for teachers to collaborate

## Commendation

The commitment of teachers to advancing content knowledge through continuing education

# Standard 3 Recommendations

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## Recommendation

Provide a formal process for students to understand and review the core values and 21st century learning expectations

## Recommendation

Provide ongoing training for teachers around the purposeful, meaningful integration of technology in the classroom

# Standard 4 Indicator 1

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## Conclusions

The professional staff is in the beginning stages of developing 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. During the 2016-2017 school year, the school developed a beginning draft of school-wide rubrics to align with the school's 21st century learning expectations. Five rubrics were created by the entire faculty with the intention of piloting them immediately after the creation. Teachers reported difficulty with the universality of application using the five school-wide rubrics in each course. A lack of professional development for application of the school-wide rubrics and its measurement of skills led to frustration amongst the teachers. Curriculum coordinators began investigating alternative methods to assess the 21st century learning expectations in response to rubric use frustration. While over 68 percent of teachers report using school-wide rubrics, other evidence suggests that a large number of teachers are actually utilizing scoring guides and departmental-based rubrics. There is widespread confusion between an assignment scoring guide and a school-wide rubric. The school has not fully implemented a formal ongoing process using the school-wide analytic rubrics to assess whole-school and individual student achievement of each of the school's 21st century learning expectations. When all teachers consistently use the school-wide rubrics to assess individual student progress and whole-school progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations, teachers and students will be able to track students' progress throughout their school careers and the school will be able to more effectively assess its programs.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- students
- Endicott survey

# Standard 4 Indicator 2

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## Conclusions

The school's professional staff has not yet communicated individual student or school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students, families, and the school community, however the staff has made efforts to communicate individual student progress in demonstrating the core values. During the 2017-2018 school year, SHS attempted to communicate individual student progress toward the core values by aligning them with teacher comments on the student report cards. This change resulted in confusion. Teachers, students, and parents did not understand the intended connection between the comments and the common core values. Based on feedback from all stakeholders, a revision in the report card comments process following the first marking period alleviated most issues for teachers. Inconsistent understanding of the meaning of each report card comment aligned to the core values amongst the students and parents remains. The school's professional staff has not communicated the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations nor does it have a process for measuring the school's learning expectations. Approximately 57 percent of parents feel that the school provides them with a formal report, in addition to course grades, which explains their children's progress in achieving school-wide 21st century learning expectations; however, few parents seem to be aware of these skills. When a formal protocol is in place to report progress on all of the school-wide learning expectations to students, families, and the school community, SHS will have a clear understanding of how well students are progressing toward achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- students
- Endicott survey

# Standard 4 Indicator 3

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## Conclusions

Professional staff occasionally collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. In 2017 based on ELA and math SAT data and CAPT science results, the Connecticut State Department of Education identified an achievement gap between the non-high needs and high-needs student test takers. School leaders plan to address the achievement gap between these two groups of students. Sixty-one percent of the professional staff feel they collect, disaggregate, and analyze data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. Teachers informally review student work; however, some teachers use common time for curriculum development instead of data analysis and assessment of the implementation of the school-wide analytic rubrics. The majority of teachers review summative and standardized assessments, specifically benchmark assessments, and informally discuss data in some content areas. The science department reviews results of summative common assessments in integrated science, biology, and chemistry. This practice is also present in the English department where they review common writing pieces at three points throughout the year. Teachers who support students through the Wildcat Time sometimes use data to inform instruction and monitor progress. Unless a student receives accommodations through special education or a 504 Plan, there is no formal process for teachers to analyze their formative and summative assessments to identify inequities in student achievement. When teachers formally collect, disaggregate, and analyze data to identify inequities in student achievement, they can modify their curriculum and instruction to reduce inequities in student achievement.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- Endicott survey

# Standard 4 Indicator 4

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## Conclusions

Prior to each unit of study, teachers often communicate to students the applicable unit-specific goals to be assessed, but rarely refer to the school's 21st century learning expectations. Teachers often distribute schedules, assignments, and scoring guides in advance of the presentation of new material. Sixty-two percent of students feel the teachers explain what the learning expectations are before each unit of study, while over 57 percent of parents feel that the teachers communicate the learning expectations prior to each unit of study. Teachers do not use the pertinent school-wide rubrics either as an introduction to, or as an assessment tool, for the new units. Additionally, teachers use online platforms such as Google Classroom and Haiku, a learning management system, to communicate unit-specific goals to students. When students are given the school's 21st century learning expectations along with the applicable unit-specific goals prior to instruction, students will be more aware of the criteria they will be assessed on which will help them as they strive to meet the learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- student work
- teacher interview
- Endicott survey

# Standard 4 Indicator 5

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## Conclusions

Prior to summative assessments, a large number of teachers provide students with the corresponding assignment-specific scoring guides and departmental analytic rubrics, rather than the school-wide analytic rubrics. Students comment that they receive assignment-specific rubrics or scoring guides prior to some assignments in most classes. Teachers assert that departmental rubrics have been a consistent part of their assessment practices and provide examples of summative assignments that include rubrics with specific criteria. Over 74 percent of students are in total agreement that they understand what work they have to accomplish to meet their teachers' expectations, and 79 percent say their teachers use clear criteria for assessment. There are many examples of departmental rubrics and scoring guides with specific targets given to students before summative assessments. The English and social studies departments share an argumentative writing rubric which is used in assessing major writing assignments. The music technology students receive rubrics via Google Classroom prior to the completion of composition projects. The rubric used for an AP Psychology "Harkness Discussion" lays out the criteria for each letter grade. The forensic science class is given an assignment-specific rubric with corresponding bullet points explaining how to achieve the highest score before an assessment is completed. Because teachers are consistent with their use of assignment-specific scoring guides and department analytic rubrics, the students are aware of the teachers' expectations on summative assessments and are empowered to higher achievement.

## Sources of Evidence

- student work
- teacher interview
- students
- Endicott survey

# Standard 4 Indicator 6

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## Conclusions

In each unit of study, a vast majority of teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments. Approximately 96 percent of teachers use a variety and range of assessment strategies including formative and summative assessments. Student work and reports from multiple courses show an assortment of performance-based assessments. In a Spanish course a pen/pal writing assessment provides students the opportunity to converse with students in Spain, and in social studies students demonstrate their learning by creating armed forces recruitment propaganda posters. Teachers from multiple courses report the use of frequent formative assessments, including exit slips, warm-ups, Quizlet, Kahoot, clickers, and one-on-one student meetings to assess students' understanding of the day's lesson. Summative assessments encompass traditional assessments such as essays, projects, labs, presentations, and discussions as well as many other types of creative and engaging summative assessments such as comic strips, portfolios, posters, video projects/skits, public performances, student-led teaching, function notebooks, and face-off debates. Because teachers incorporate a variety of assessment strategies, students are allowed to demonstrate their learning in multiple ways.

## Sources of Evidence

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

# Standard 4 Indicator 7

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## Conclusions

Teachers regularly meet during professional learning community (PLC) time, however formal collaboration on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments is scattered amongst departments. Eighty percent of teachers believe that they meet formally to discuss and improve both formative and summative assessment strategies. At minimum, teachers with shared courses have scheduled weekly PLC meetings. For instance, common formative and summative assessments that have been analyzed and undergone revisions through a collaborative process in the social studies department include visual analysis via OPTICs, primary source analysis via "Historical Context Audience Purpose Point of View Why" (HAPPY), argumentative writing via document-based question (DBQ) essays, and active listening/oral communication via student-led discussion. In the agriscience department teachers create common assessments including wedding client interview and supervised agricultural experience projects. In the science department teachers have worked collaboratively to embed data analysis, synthesis skills, critical thinking, and data collection into common labs (four to six times a year), weekly content quizzes, and common summative assessments. Other departments report that they sometimes collaborate on common assessments and scoring, however this is not a consistent practice. Analysis of formative and summative assessment data is limited amongst most departments. Professional development on the use of formative and summative data to inform instruction was delivered to the faculty by the professional development evaluation committee (PDEC). When there is a formal plan to use planned department time to create, analyze, and revise formative and summative assessments, there will be an improvement of instruction and curriculum development.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- Endicott survey

# Standard 4 Indicator 8

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## Conclusions

Teachers frequently provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work. Over 62 percent of students say that teachers offer suggestions to help them improve their schoolwork. Although only 59 percent of students think their teachers' grading is fair and consistent and their work is corrected in a reasonable amount of time, many students stated that teachers provide timely and appropriate feedback. Teacher feedback is delivered in a multitude of ways, including commentary provided on scoring guides, suggestions written directly on assignments, and digital comments submitted through Google applications. Departments are required to have a retest policy. In the science and math departments students who score below a certain score have the opportunity to retake the assessment within a given period of time provided they show evidence of preparation. Additionally, the English and social studies departments allow for multiple revisions of student essay writing, often with an outline or rough draft as part of the process. One English teacher has been implementing a revision policy for many years in which she provides students with corrective feedback on their essays electronically in an effort to guide revisions and promote new learning. As a result of consistent and quality feedback from teachers, students are better able to identify and address their weaknesses.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- students
- Endicott survey

# Standard 4 Indicator 9

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## Conclusions

Across the school, teachers regularly use formative assessments to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning. The vast majority of teachers report that they use formative assessments to adapt instruction to help improve student learning. Types of formative assessments teachers use to inform or adapt instruction include exit slips, "do now" activities, practice problems, think-pair-share, summaries/paraphrasing, classroom polls, Google form responses, outlines, first drafts, free writes, short writing assignments, online assessments such as NoRedInk, Newsela, quizzes, board work, lab reports, discussions, journals, and homework. Specifically, in the English classrooms, students are given a baseline nonfiction essay in September. Teachers review strengths and weaknesses found in the responses and create specific lessons around assessing the strength of an argument. Students are given another nonfiction article with the same prompt to see if weak areas have improved, and teachers use the new set of data from this formative assessment in order to craft new lessons around more challenging skills. Additionally, a math teacher was observed pausing during a direct instruction lesson to question students to check for understanding. When students were able to answer the questions, the teacher moved on; conversely, if students seemed confused or unsure, the teacher paused to review the concept. As a result of teachers regularly using formative assessment data to inform and adapt their individual instruction, student achievement of the 21st century learning expectations is improved.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- students

# Standard 4 Indicator 10

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## Conclusions

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 student work, common course and common grade-level assessments, standardized assessments, but do not yet examine individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations, data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post secondary institutions, or survey data from current students and alumni.

Approximately 63 percent of staff reports that teachers and administrators examine a variety and range of student work, common course assessment, common grade-level assessment, and standardized assessments to revise and improve curriculum and instructional practices. Teachers have PLC time built into their weekly schedules, in which time some departments occasionally spend time analyzing student learning. The science department records student common summative assessment data and discusses the results amongst PLC members. During this time teachers collaborate by sharing examples of student work and student performance on common grade-level assessments. Teachers report that they individually examine common assessments, and sometimes informally do so with their colleagues in addition to the PLC time. Teachers and administrators have not been able to examine individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. Occasionally, teachers review standardized assessments results, such as the PSATs. In August 2017 they conducted a "data dive" entitled "Know Your Students Day," in which they reviewed standardized assessments in order to best plan for their incoming students. Teachers and administrators receive and review data from sending schools and post-secondary institutions; however, the data has been sporadic and inconsistent in nature. There is no data examined from surveying current students or alumni.

When teachers and administrators collect evidence of student learning from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions; survey data from current students and alumni, individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations, and when they are given time to collaboratively examine all this evidence in addition to other measures currently in place, curriculum and instructional practice will be improved across the school.

## Sources of Evidence

- teachers
- department leaders
- Endicott survey

# Standard 4 Indicator 11

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## Conclusions

Grading and reporting practices are not currently being reviewed or revised in a formal process to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. Individual teachers are adapting their grading procedures to meet individual needs, and there is some collaboration within individual departments. Over 47 percent of staff feel that school-wide grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised. Some academic departments have reported that they have used a significant portion of PLC time to create and modify curriculum, particularly with new curricula, which can impact time available to work collaboratively on assessment and related classroom practices. The social studies department has worked to modify sequencing and assessment practices in some of their courses. Specifically, there is limited evidence that the school's grading practices are not specifically aligned with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. When grading practices across the school are directly aligned to school's core values and beliefs about learning, the core values will be more deeply integrated into the assessment culture of the school.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- students
- department leaders
- Endicott survey

# Standard 4 Commendations

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## **Commendation**

The communication of unit-specific learning goals prior to each unit of study

## **Commendation**

The clear and specific communication of teacher expectations and goals to students

## **Commendation**

The variety of assessment strategies used by teachers throughout all courses

## **Commendation**

The specific and corrective feedback that is provided to students consistently across disciplines

## **Commendation**

The teachers' use of the results of their formative assessments to adapt their individual instructional strategies

# Standard 4 Recommendations

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## Recommendation

Implement a formal, ongoing process using specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics to assess whole-school and individual achievement of each of the school's 21st century learning expectations

## Recommendation

Develop and implement a process to communicate individual student progress and the whole-school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students, their families, and to the community at large

## Recommendation

Develop and implement a formal process of collecting, disaggregating, and analyzing data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement

## Recommendation

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

## Recommendation

Implement a formal process to create, analyze, and revise formative and summative assessments

## Recommendation

Create opportunities for teachers and administrators to examine all evidence of student learning, curriculum, and instructional practice

## Recommendation

Provide time for formal teacher collaboration, both within and amongst departments, on grading and reporting practices to ensure alignment to the school's core values and beliefs about learning

# Standard 5 Indicator 1

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## Conclusions

Suffield High 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.

Safety has been labeled a high priority for this institution in that 75 percent of parents and students agree that the school has an overall safe environment. Although 80 percent of parents feel the school provides a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive school culture and mirror these sentiments in open discussion, only 48 percent of students and teachers feel that students respect teachers, whereas 67.1 percent of students feel respected by teachers. Only 52.6 percent of student respondents feel that teachers are concerned about their learning, while over 74 percent of teachers indicate that they support students in assuming responsibility for their learning. The creation of Wildcat Time allows students to visit with any teacher when they are in need of extra help, need to redo assignments, or work on assignments or projects. Students are given 30-40 minutes of Wildcat Time daily. Freshman students commented that Wildcat Time helps their transition to high school life. This additional time embedded within the high school schedule provides an additional opportunity supporting individualized student success. This is reflected in the high school's plan to provide resources and time to strengthen the student social-emotional wellness/character development programming. Although positive, teachers and parents agree that a more sustainable process should be explored to ensure students are getting the full benefits of the Wildcat Time experience. The handbook communicates to students and families the policies on attendance, bullying, academic integrity, and the code of student conduct. Approximately 19 percent of students think that bullying is a problem at SHS. Both students and teachers agree that there may be some misunderstanding in the definition of bullying in that not all mean-spirited behavior is reported by students. Teachers and staff also believe students trust them and seek them out when serious issues arise during the day.

Because intentional efforts are used towards creating a positive school culture, students feel safe and supported and take an active role in their own learning.

## Sources of Evidence

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

# Standard 5 Indicator 2

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## Conclusions

Suffield High School is mostly equitable and inclusive in ensuring access to challenging academic experiences to the majority of students, making sure courses throughout the curriculum reflect the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century expectations. Current programming does not outline specifics in supporting students in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. Every student is enrolled in at least two heterogeneously grouped courses that count toward graduation. Students enrolled in the agriscience program have access to 14 opportunities within heterogeneously populated courses with two of the courses counting toward specific graduation requirements. Overall the school provides 88 courses outside of the core academic course offerings. Over 72 percent of students say that they have a number of opportunities to take courses with students of differing abilities. Teachers and special education staff work together to assist students in recommending or selecting most courses, including AP classes. Teachers indicate that students with IEPs or 504 plans have been encouraged to take AP or honors courses and a few students have benefited from UCONN Early College Experience English. The school leadership believes that students desiring to challenge themselves should be afforded the opportunity to take higher level classes. Parents also have the right to waive their children into higher level courses. The school offers elective courses in fine arts, applied arts, technology, and family and consumer sciences. All of these electives are populated with students of all grades and ability levels. English, science, social studies, and world languages also offer heterogeneously grouped classes across all grade levels. When Suffield High School provides opportunities for students that are equitable and inclusive, then students will master 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

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

# Standard 5 Indicator 3

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## Conclusions

There is a formal program through which each student is assigned to an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who are developing the capacity to know the student well and assist the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

A total of 50.6 percent of students believe that there is an adult in the school who knows them well and regularly helps them to succeed. Sixty-one percent also agree that the adult is someone, aside from their school counselor. This year, Suffield High School has implemented the Wildcat Time program where students and teachers meet five times per week for 30-40 minutes in groups of up to 20 students per day. On Monday of each week, students meet in small groups with an assigned teacher to schedule their Wildcat Time for Tuesday through Friday. Interactions during this time are largely limited to scheduling students for the rest of the week. A majority of students do not remain with the assigned teacher for the remainder of the week. Some students reported that they are required by teachers to use their Wildcat Time to attend additional instruction in certain AP classes during the week in effort to cover the curriculum before AP testing in May. Students have a variety of options ranging from receiving targeted instruction, SAT preparation or enrichment. Teachers can also make recommendations for students based on their academic performance through the use of an online Enriching Student system that streamlines scheduling options.

Students reported having limited contact with school counselors with communication restricted to course scheduling. Students have a variety of options. Approximately 66 percent of teachers actively participate as an advisor/mentor during Wildcat Time to personalize each student's educational experience. Many teachers provided feedback on the need for Wildcat Time to also address the social-emotional needs of students. Students and teachers expressed an interest in having a more formal structure for building relationships. Some students also report that they would like to have more time to establish deeper connections among grade-level peers. Students have expressed mixed feelings about Wildcat Time, noting that the majority of time is spent focused on completing missed assignments or homework. Several honors and AP students find the program valuable as they are able to study more to meet class expectations. Wildcat Time has been integrated into the bell schedule and has the full support of parents because of its primary current focus on providing additional academic support.

When the school fully develops a program that is collaborative and structured to connect students to a trusted adult, in addition to the counselor, students will have more support in achieving the school's 21st century expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- students
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

# Standard 5 Indicator 4

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## Conclusions

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

Monthly faculty meetings along with four hours of weekly professional learning community (PLC) meetings allow for teachers to work within their content teams to develop and upload curriculum as well as to engage in open discourse with colleagues focused on student learning and instruction. Teachers have mixed feelings about the feedback received from supervisors who are responsible for evaluating their teaching. While 68.9 percent agree that evaluation practices play an important role in improving their instructional practice, some teachers indicated feedback seems superficial and scripted. The principal recognizes the importance of purposeful feedback and has included professional development coaching for his leadership team focused on questioning, reflection, and identifying best practices to support teacher growth through the evaluation process. This initiative supports effective dialogue and feedback between the teacher and evaluator in order to improve instruction and assessment. However, outside resources have not been utilized to support staff needs in developing and implementing school-wide rubrics. The professional development and evaluation committee (PDEC), which the principal and several teachers serve on, utilizes surveys to determine additional teacher professional development needs. Over 45 percent of teachers feel the school's professional development programs enable teachers to acquire and use skills to improve instruction and assessment. A total of \$48,200 in the district budget has been slated for general professional development for which teachers are encouraged to seek outside resources based on their own identified needs. There is not a clearly articulated protocol which describes how PLC time should be spent to improve curriculum, instruction and assessment. A few teachers believe that structure in the PLC model would lead to efficiency in the development and revision of curriculum and the ability to use student data to drive instruction. Currently, there is inconsistent application of the skills, practices, and ideas gained through professional development. Some departments revise curriculum and discuss assessment data, but not by design.

When schools dedicate adequate time and funding for meaningful ongoing professional development, and when teachers participate in the collaborative application of professional learning, staff will be able to provide students at SHS with the highest quality educational experience possible and attainment of the school's 21st century learning expectations will improve.

## Sources of Evidence

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

# Standard 5 Indicator 5

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## Conclusions

Suffield High School regularly uses research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning. School leaders use a variety of data to champion efforts around improving teaching and learning. The System for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED) model, is used as an evaluation system that uses multiple sources of information and evidence-based theories to achieve a fair, accurate, and complete picture of each teacher's performance. School leadership believes that the evaluation process focuses on best practices for instruction. The building principal and assistant principals conduct a combination of formal and informal evaluations to focus on best practices for instruction. Student learning objectives (SLOs) across content-specific classes are created using evaluation data. The creation of the professional development and evaluation committee (PDEC) provide a platform for instructional leaders to engage in open discourse around trends within the school community and prioritize efforts to support a system to continually improve classroom instruction. For example, instructors in the social studies department have been able to use information from PDEC to immediately adjust instruction and curriculum planning. Leadership reports using data from the evaluation system to support the need for evaluator coaching focused on purposeful feedback that builds a culture of reflective practice. These changes have been reported to have eliminated redundancy in what is being covered within the department. Because data is effectively used to inform the evaluation and supervision process, a greater focus on improved student learning is positively impacted.

## Sources of Evidence

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

# Standard 5 Indicator 6

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## Conclusions

The organization of time does not yet have protocols in place to support research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students. Suffield High School operates on a seven-period modified-block schedule with four-minute passing time from class to class and three daily 25-26 minute lunch waves. The schedule includes two days per week (Wednesdays and Thursdays) of extended blocks of between 86-90 minutes, providing opportunities for research-based learning opportunities such as labs, and project-based inquiries. Classes meet for 43-48 minutes on Mondays and Fridays and for 51-55 minutes on Tuesdays with additional time allotted for live streaming morning announcements during the first period of each day. The inclusion of the daily Wildcat Time affords teachers additional time to provide student-focused academic support. The district's plan for continuous improvement calls for an increase in teacher collaboration by providing six half-day professional development opportunities and weekly PLC content meeting focused on improving instructional practice. Curriculum leaders are given autonomy in structuring PLC activities. Teachers report inconsistencies in PLC across departments. Some departments utilize this time to address curriculum targets, while others feel that some instructional leaders lack a clear understanding of district expectations for the use of PLC time, which hinders holistic professional collaboration among teachers. When the organization of time amongst teachers at SHS allows for structured and focused professional collaboration among teachers, the learning needs of all students will be met.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school leadership

# Standard 5 Indicator 7

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## Conclusions

Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. Over 81 percent of students along with 79.2 percent of parents agree that class sizes are manageable to meet their individual needs. For the 2017-2018 school year, while class size is capped at 25 or 28 students in the content areas of English, math, social studies, science and world languages, the average class size in these content classes is 19 students. This is up from 17.1 students in the 2016-2017 school year. In other subject areas, the average class size ranged from 11.2 students in agriscience courses to 18.1 in business courses. Enrollment in some classes is relatively low. Examples include concert choir with 3 students, piano/keyboard with 5, maintenance and equipment operation with 6, and business law with 8 students. Students are also offered the opportunity to enrich their studies at the Hartford Academy of the Arts, Greater Hartford Academy of Math and Science, and the Asnuntuck Community College manufacturing program on a part-time basis while enrolled at SHS. Special education caseload numbers range from 15 to 18 students which enables special education teachers to meet individual needs, communicate with parents, and collaborate with teachers. Sixty percent of teachers feel that current class sizes and case loads are adequate to meet the needs of all students. During Wildcat Time teachers may host up to 20 students for individualized instruction, review or tutoring. With manageable student load and class size, teachers can meet the learning needs of individual students.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teachers
- parents
- Endicott survey

# Standard 5 Indicator 8

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## Conclusions

The principal, working with a variety of building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Nearly 56 percent of teachers and staff believe the principal and other school-based administrators provide instructional leadership that is consistent with the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, and 51.5 percent of students believe that the principal is clear about his goals for all of them. The principal and his leadership team, which consists of nine curriculum chairs, four curriculum leaders, the district integration specialists, and two assistant principals, serves as the policy-making team for the school. For three years, the team has worked to create individual and school-wide goals connected to instruction, technology, common assessments, student engagement, school-wide rubrics and digital portfolios to measure student progress in the context of the school's learning expectations. Implementation of the long-term goals, which are included in the SHS Improvement Plan for the 2017-2018 school year, is not yet complete. Teachers believe that more professional development hours are needed to ensure the development of an aligned curriculum as well as a full complement of school-wide rubrics. Successful implementation of the instructional practices, led by school leaders, will reinforce the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations are reinforced.

## Sources of Evidence

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

# Standard 5 Indicator 9

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## Conclusions

Teachers, students and parents are sometimes involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership. Roughly half of teachers agree that they, with students and parents, are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership. Teachers participate in weekly departmental PLC meetings, and once monthly, make collaborative department-specific decisions at department meetings, where an evaluative administrator and/or curriculum coordinator participates. Monthly leadership meetings, where all departments are represented, address district and building initiatives and inform decisions regarding curriculum, assessments, school climate, and community outreach. Teachers take on the role of facilitator at monthly faculty meetings and during professional development days, where they present materials, ideas, and teaching methods that have been successful. A monthly early release day helps to facilitate additional teacher collaborations.

Over 36 percent of students say they have input on important decisions. Student leaders report that the principal is accessible to them. Students are also empowered to act as advocates of change. For example, student leaders recently conducted their own survey about the policy of missing and making up PE classes. They presented the survey to the principal who supported their conclusions and helped institute changes that more effectively addressed student needs. Another student initiated a program that introduced an emotional support animal, a three-year-old dog, to the school. The student researched requirements relating to emotional support animals, secured the endorsement and permission of the principal, certified her pet, and developed a system for bringing the dog to school for this purpose. The dog, who is present on most days and who is assigned specifically to a classroom designed to accommodate social and emotional support for students, has proven to be a welcomed and productive citizen of SHS. Student leaders have also found a platform in Enriching Students, an online scheduling platform, that allows students the opportunity to have a voice in scheduling Wildcat Time. Using this platform, advisory teachers meet with students on Monday mornings to formally schedule Wildcat Time for students as well, when they need additional help from their classroom teachers. During subsequent Wildcat Time enrichment periods, students report to those teachers for academic help. Students meet with school counselors as active partners in their own course selection process. Forty-five students are enrolled in student senate with two advisors and one administrator. The group meets bi-weekly and acts as a liaison between the student body and the principal and other members of administration on a variety of issues and concerns.

Slightly more than 50 percent of SHS parents believe that they have an active role in decision-making at SHS. Parents who serve on the parent advisory council advise on a variety of different building issues. Specialized building-based committees, including spirit squad, SpEd PAC, the scheduling committee, the awards committee, school climate committee, and safe school climate committee are comprised of various combinations of students, teachers, administrators and parents. When more opportunities are provided that allow all stakeholders to be a part of the decision-making process, responsibility and ownership is promoted in the school community.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teachers
- students
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey

# Standard 5 Indicator 10

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## Conclusions

Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school to increase student engagement in learning. The staff engages in some professional development opportunities and will lead professional development for colleagues on topics such as technology integration, teaching strategies and assessments, and intervention programs. Student leaders serve on numerous committees that foster student engagement and that address diverse areas including, but not limited to, school climate, discipline, scheduling, student recognition awards, and PDEC, which creates relevant and useful professional development for the school. Teachers attend opportunities outside of the district as well. Teachers are currently in the process of implementing initiatives, particularly in formulating common assessments and mapping curriculum. Some teachers are invested in the process because of their involvement in the creation of curriculum documents specific to their departments during paid professional development with a curriculum leader, as well as in regularly scheduled PLC time that encourages members of specific departments to utilize ongoing common planning sessions weekly. Teachers, however, do not consistently implement changes to the school culture and to their own practices across content areas, and acknowledge that there is “room to grow” in this regard. Some teachers report that the faculty is “slowly getting on board” in its attempts to develop school-wide rubrics and to integrate core values into their classroom practice. Several teachers have stated that they agree that teacher growth inspires student growth. When teachers show initiative and leadership in and out of the classroom, a positive school culture exists that motivates students to become engaged in the learning process.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- central office personnel

# Standard 5 Indicator 11

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## Conclusions

The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. Nearly 53 percent of staff is in agreement that all three are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century skills. The school board, superintendent, and the principal explicitly express a mutually satisfying collaborative effort, particularly in regard to educational reforms. Monthly, the superintendent and principal attend school climate committee meetings, school board subcommittee on teaching and learning, and meet with the school's accreditation committee. The principal meets weekly with the assistant superintendent of curriculum to collaborate on 21st century learning expectations and also collaborates weekly with the two assistant principals to reflect on and construct strategies and goals. Monthly leadership meetings with all of these administrators are scheduled with the superintendent. They also regularly present to the school board on particular programs that may include the development of school-wide rubrics and curriculum, schedule changes to accommodate programs like Wildcat Time, new course proposals, annual reports on professional development, testing, and strategic planning progress. Budget issues are handled in a collaborative format as well. The principal also supports the vision of the superintendent with new focus on instruction and curriculum mapping. By working together collaboratively, the school board, superintendent, principal and other administrators engage in reflective and constructive achievement of the 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey

# Standard 5 Indicator 12

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## Conclusions

The school board and the superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. Although only 38 percent of SHS staff and 56.5 percent of parents believe the principal is provided with sufficient decision-making authority, the principal reports having sufficient decision-making authority. With the input from all stakeholders (including teacher-driven committees, parents, staff, the school board, and other building administrators), the principal has decision-making authority at SHS. This model is consistently supported by the school board. Under this model, the principal has established school-wide goals, changed the daily schedule, implemented Wildcat Time, established core values and 21st century learning expectations, changed graduation requirements, removed class rank from the school, changed the senior privilege policy, increased GPA requirements for sports and club participation, amended NHS policy, updated report card comments, and added new courses. All of these decisions, while informed by stakeholders, were made by the principal. With sufficient decision-making authority, the principal is able to proactively lead the school to best serve students.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- school board
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

# Standard 5 Commendations

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## Commendation

The safe, positive, and supportive learning environment

## Commendation

The wide variety of elective courses open to students

## Commendation

The open enrollment of AP and honors courses

## Commendation

The funding, support, and time allocated for professional development

## Commendation

The research-based evaluation program that was developed through an inclusive process that is focused on student learning and instructional-based practices

## Commendation

The dedicated time that encourages collaboration and professional learning

## Commendation

The average class size that allows teacher to meet the individual needs of students

## Commendation

The commitment of the leadership team to distribute instructional leadership

## Commendation

The meaningful opportunities for students, parents, and teachers to participate in the decision-making process

# Commendation

The commitment of teachers to school improvement

# Standard 5 Recommendations

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## Recommendation

Ensure that Wildcat Time provides each student with an adult in the school, in addition to the counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations

## Recommendation

Develop and implement a process for measuring and reporting the school's 21st century learning expectations using school-wide rubrics

## Recommendation

Provide structure and support during PLC time to engage in professional discourse in the analysis of teaching and learning in the revision of curriculum

## Recommendation

Review, revise and design opportunities for students to develop relationships with each other and adults through a formal capacity such as Wildcat Time

## Recommendation

Provide structured support for the social-emotional needs of all students throughout the school year

# Standard 6 Indicator 1

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## Conclusions

The school has some 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.

Approximately 64 percent of staff, 53 percent of parents, and 41 percent of students agree 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 administrative team, school counselors, and one regular education teacher attend weekly Student Assistance Model (SAM) meetings. These meetings are occasionally attended by one or more of the school psychologists. Each meeting is devoted to a theme of attendance, academic concerns, or social/emotional needs. Although these weekly meetings occur, a plan to address concerns identified is not necessarily developed and communicated to each student's teachers. Teachers reported they are unsure of how SAM worked, have not received consistent communication from the SAM team, and some teachers wondered if it is still in existence.

Administration plans to refine the protocol for collecting and disseminating information to teachers so that an effective Scientific Research Based Interventions (SRBI) model is in place. The addition of a reading and writing interventionist over the last two school years has provided targeted interventions for students. Interventionists are minimally integrated into regular education classrooms and also provide individualized programming. Inconsistent application of online classrooms and credit recovery was discussed by teachers, school counselors, and administrators. Wildcat Time has been an opportunity to provide students with tier two intervention services. Students can request to meet with teachers in those classes in which they are having difficulty. However, in some cases, such as mathematics, teachers are unavailable to help students because Wildcat capacity limits are reached. The counselors use this time to meet with small groups for social and emotional support. The interventionists work with students during this time. Another positive intervention in place at SHS is a student-run writing lab where students receive support with all aspects of their writing assignments. The lab is run by students who have taken a specific writing class that qualifies them to assist in the writing lab. Students report this support to be extremely helpful. Some teachers require students to access the writing lab for support, and students also access the space on their own when needed. There are two certified school psychologists who also support students' emotional needs.

When intervention strategies are more effectively communicated and delivered in a timely and coordinated manner, it will facilitate each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

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

# Standard 6 Indicator 2

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## Conclusions

Suffield High School provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services. Approximately 69 percent of staff report the school provides information to families about available student support services, which is supported by 72 percent of parents and 66 percent of students who report receiving this information. Information about available student support services is provided through the school's website, student handbook, PowerSchool (a school information database), parent advisory council, personal phone calls, emails, and Naviance (a college and career readiness platform). In addition, the school counselors offer an open house night for rising 9th graders and their families, a day for students to visit the high school independently, and utilize Wildcat Time to deliver a 9th grade curriculum which communicates basic and necessary information about the school and its resources. The high school principal also produces a monthly newsletter which is available on the school's website and may include information about student support services. As a result of the communication tools used by the school, families are well informed about available student support services.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- parents
- Endicott survey
- school website

# Standard 6 Indicator 3

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## Conclusions

Support services staff use technology to deliver a range of coordinated services for each student. PowerSchool, a school information database, offers parents continuously updated information about their children's grades, schedule, and attendance. In addition, PowerSchool offers teachers access to IEPs and the school is planning to provide 504 Plans through PowerSchool as well. The IEP Direct program allows school counselors and other support services staff to document progress toward IEP goals. The school nurse utilizes SNAP, a healthcare data management system, to log student visits, medical history, current medical needs, and student medications. The library collection is accessible to students through the use of Destiny, an online card catalog. Additionally, a student-created computer program is used to log student visits and teacher referrals to the library. The school library website does not currently include links to other available resources or instructional information about the research process to help the students use the library collection to its fullest potential. Naviance, a college and career information platform, is utilized by students and parents for college and career exploration, planning, and admission-related activities. Teachers use Naviance to post letters of recommendation, and counselors are beginning to utilize the Naviance college and career readiness curriculum to build a library of standards-based classroom lesson plans. PowerSchool is used by educators to make placement recommendations to honors and AP level classes and the school counselor coordinator to create the master schedule. School counselors use Google Classroom for each grade level to share information about Khan Academy, Naviance requirements, and general announcements. Some teachers use Google Drive to deliver instructional materials, share information, and provide feedback to guide completion of assignments. As a result of the diverse collection of technology tools available, the support staff is able to deliver a range of services for each student.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

# Standard 6 Indicator 4

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## Conclusions

School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers; are working toward meeting regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling; engage in individual and group meetings with all students; and in some areas 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, but do not currently deliver a written, developmental program.

Suffield High School's counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff to support approximately 800 students. The department includes two full-time school psychologists who conduct testing and provide counseling services, three full-time school counselors with an average caseload of 225 students; and one full-time coordinator of counseling services for grades 6-12 with a caseload of 120 students at SHS. Approximately 66 percent of students know who to ask for help at school if they have a personal problem, and approximately 64 percent feel comfortable going to their school counselor. Sixty-four percent of parents feel that there is an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff for the school counseling services.

Students are assigned to school counselors randomly for a four-year cycle and are identified as the student's counselor in PowerSchool and Naviance. A full-time department secretary provides administrative support for the school counselors and school psychologists, provides administrative support to support the 504 Student Accommodation Plan process, serves as the registrar, and maintains student records for the district.

The school counselors do not currently deliver a written, developmental program to all students. The coordinator is working to create a comprehensive school counseling program which will be vertically aligned in grades 6-12.

Approximately 27 percent of students report meeting with their school counselor regularly. In conversations with students, a need for more consistent access to their school counselor was underscored. School counselors report that at times they are overwhelmed with the amount of time spent in PPT (planning and placement team), SAM, transition meetings and lunch duties. Most school counselors report their time spent in responsive counseling services is increasing and the degree to which they integrate college readiness has decreased. The district's special education director meets regularly with the counseling staff, and school counselors underwent a formal time analysis and subsequent professional development from the school counseling consultant from the Connecticut State Department of Education in an effort to make best use of their time.

The comprehensive developmental school counseling program will continue to address the specific methods that school counselors utilize in individual, group and classroom settings. Wildcat Time is used for small group counseling with all 9th grade students to complete career interest inventories. Counselors offer students who struggle with school engagement information about summer and evening credit recovery programs at Agawam High School; Edgenuity online learning is made available on a case-by-case basis.

Counselors have collaborated with Asnuntuck Community College to create a sixteen-week curriculum targeting career and college decision-making, time management, and emotional wellness which is integrated into the Wildcat advisory period. School counselors collaborate with the Life Education program to offer college and career counseling and suicide prevention lessons. Counselors offer evening programs for parents and students including an eighth grade open house, a ninth grade orientation, a college planning night, and a financial aid night.

Counselors utilize data gleaned from the school climate survey and student surveys to identify student needs and inform programming including college and career readiness events, parent events, new student transition events, social/emotional programs and the formulation of a parent advisory group. SAT, ACT, AP and PSAT data

provides evidence relative to college readiness.

While there are a sufficient number of counselors who have resources to deliver collaborative and comprehensive school counseling programs and are moving toward using relevant assessment data and feedback from the school community to improve service , when the school counseling department implements a written developmental program, school counselors will be able to work collaboratively with other professional staff to ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

## **Sources of Evidence**

- self-study
- teachers
- students
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- school website

# Standard 6 Indicator 5

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## Conclusions

Suffield High School's library/media services have a sufficient number of certified/licensed personnel who provide a range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum; 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, but do not frequently engage in implementing the school's curriculum and is minimally available or staffed for students before and after school. The library staff includes one full-time library media specialist (LMS). The loss of the full-time paraprofessional position is balanced with at least one teacher on duty in the library during every block to help monitor students. The Media Center is open from 7:10 AM to 2:20 PM Monday through Friday, which only provides students with 30 minutes of access to the library beyond the school day. Approximately 72% of students, 71% of teachers and 75% of parents agree the library provides a wide range of resources to support student learning needs. There are over 18,000 items in the print collection and 4 digital databases. Only 19.3% of students agree the library is used during classes and approximately 45% of teachers agreed the library is used as a resource for assignments in the classes. At this time the LMS is devoted to managing the new responsibilities that came with the elimination of the paraprofessional and the changing dynamics of the library in efforts to move towards a Learning Commons model. The library media specialist works with all freshman for a library orientation lesson and has sporadic collaboration between mostly English and Social Studies. The library media specialist has had limited success planning and collaborating with teachers across departments. The LMS is responsive to student interests by giving students a voice about what books should be ordered. Students are also involved as "student library aides" who help at the circulation desk, help students access sources, and help with displays. When the library/media services are effectively integrated into the curriculum with instructional practices and library utilization has increased, the Library Learning Commons will be an integral resource for teachers and students.

## Sources of Evidence

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

# Standard 6 Indicator 6

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## Conclusions

Suffield High School's library/media services have a sufficient number of certified/licensed personnel who provide a range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum; 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, but do not frequently engage in implementing the school's curriculum and are minimally available or staffed for students before and after school.

The library staff includes one full-time library media specialist (LMS). The loss of the full-time paraprofessional position is balanced with at least one teacher on duty in the library during every block to help monitor students. The media center is open from 7:10 a.m. to 2:20 p.m. Monday through Friday, which only provides students with 30 minutes of access to the library beyond the school day.

Approximately 72 percent of students, 71 percent of teachers and 75 percent of parents agree the library provides a wide range of resources to support student learning needs. There are over 18,000 items in the print collection and four digital databases. Only 19.3 percent of students agree the library is used during classes and approximately 45 percent of teachers agree the library is used as a resource for assignments in the classes. At this time the LMS is devoted to managing the new responsibilities that came with the elimination of the paraprofessional and the changing dynamics of the library in efforts to move toward a learning commons model. The library media specialist works with all freshmen for a library orientation lesson and has sporadic collaboration between mostly English and social studies. The library media specialist has had limited success planning and collaborating with teachers across departments.

The LMS is responsive to student interests by giving students a voice about what books should be ordered. Students are also involved as student library aides who help at the circulation desk, help students access sources, and help with displays. When the library/media services are effectively integrated into the curriculum with instructional practices and library utilization has increased, the library learning commons will be an integral resource for teachers and students.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- students
- Endicott survey

# Standard 6 Indicator 7

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## Conclusions

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

There are six special education teachers, two school psychologists, and five special education paraprofessionals to address the needs of the special education population. Schedules and caseloads for special education teachers are determined by areas of content expertise resulting in an average caseload between 15 and 18 students. Speech therapy services are provided by a part-time speech therapist. Occupational therapy services, physical therapy services, and social worker services are determined by a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). School counselors, in collaboration with school administrators, are responsible for the 504 Plan process. School psychologists support students who are in crisis, provide 1:1 counseling services, and complete all psychological evaluations as part of the IEP process. Special education teachers in "Room 613" provide a space for students to access additional supports when they require time out of classes to self-regulate their emotions and provide direct instruction in social and life skills. Approximately 65 percent of teachers agree that student support services personnel collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff to achieve the school's learning expectation. Some faculty members feel support for inclusive learning opportunities is not adequate, and some of the support service personnel feel that their roles are not fully utilized. Special education services are mostly delivered in self-contained classrooms and collaboration with regular education classes is limited. Data is used to adjust services through progress monitoring of goals established in the PPT process. Special education teachers, in their role as case managers, use data to evaluate and revise student learning, behavior, and transition goals found in the IEP.

While support services include an adequate number of personnel, when a collaborative effort between special education and regular education, which includes the application of interventions, focused progress monitoring, and evaluation of services student, students will be supported as they strive to achieve the learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 6 Commendations

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## Commendation

The leadership and support opportunities provided for students in the student-led writing lab

## Commendation

The variety of communication strategies used regularly to inform parents and students

## Commendation

The use of Naviance, PowerSchool and Google Classroom to effectively communicate with parents and students

## Commendation

The commitment of health personnel to preventative and ongoing health care

## Commendation

The collaboration between the school psychologist and special education teacher to design "Room 613" to support students' unique social and emotional needs

# Standard 6 Recommendations

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## Recommendation

Develop a formalized system to collect and disseminate information about the SAM/SRBI process and specific student support plans to faculty members so a collective effort can be made to provide interventions to meet the needs of all students

## Recommendation

Establish and implement a written, comprehensive developmental school counseling program

## Recommendation

Increase collaboration between the library/media specialist and classroom teachers

## Recommendation

Ensure that special education and regular education teachers have adequate opportunities for collaboration

## Recommendation

Establish a plan that evaluates the effectiveness of the SAM/SRBI process periodically throughout the year

# Standard 7 Indicator 1

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## Conclusions

The Suffield High School community and the district's governing body has provided adequate funding for school programs and services, sufficient professional and support staff, a range of technology support and sufficient equipment, and sufficient instructional materials and supplies, however it has provided limited funding for ongoing professional development.

The school provides adequate funding for an extensive selection of academic courses, student clubs, performing groups, extracurricular activities, and athletics teams. The school has sufficient number of professional and support staff to allow for reasonable class sizes in addition to running classes with lower enrollments. The school has recently added one special education teacher and one school psychologist in response to student need. There is a district-wide social worker who works closely with the two school psychologists in the high school. In the 2017-2018 school year, there is \$48,200 budgeted for professional development and \$38,000 for curriculum revision at the district level.

However, professional development specifically on how to effectively integrate technology into the classroom learning environment has not been sufficient. Student device monitoring systems are in place, but professional development on how to integrate this technology in the classroom has not yet been provided. The role of the librarian is currently transitioning into one that aids in integrating technology into the curriculum. While the technology infrastructure and capacity general meets the needs of the school, the wireless Internet is sporadic. There are efforts to reduce personal device access and restrict permissions to improve bandwidth and result in greater productivity. There is one district-wide director of technology. The district technology integration specialist was recently eliminated. Each department has a liaison for the school technology committee that meets six times a year. In addition there is a "students working to advance technology" group (SWAT), but enrollment in this group has decreased in recent years. Faculty would like to see efforts by the administration to increase enrollment in SWAT.

Less than half (48.6 percent) of staff feel that there is adequate funding for instructional materials, supplies, and equipment. Teachers in the science and social studies departments report that they have been able to write grants to purchase materials for instruction. The science department has written and received Suffield Foundation for Excellent Schools grants to supplement curriculum. Examples includes \$12,000 for modeling software, \$1,214 for a laser system, and \$990 for a Dash Robot. The Carl D. Perkins grant was written and has provided curriculum materials for career and technical programs. Additionally, when asked, the principal makes efforts to fund unexpected and unplanned requests for instructional materials and supplies.

While Suffield High School provides adequate funding for school programs and services, sufficient professional and support staff, instructional materials and supplies, when the school provides additional funding for professional development and curriculum revision related to technology integration teachers will have the tools and resources to deliver the curriculum.

## Sources of Evidence

- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 7 Indicator 2

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## Conclusions

Suffield High School has developed, planned, and funded programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant, to adequately maintain, catalogue and replace equipment and to provide a high level of cleanliness in the building on a daily basis. The school and grounds are well maintained and the physical plant and grounds are clean and in good repair. The track was recently resurfaced and the turf carpet was examined to determine expected longevity. Outside basketball courts were also recently installed. The new tennis courts were completed and will be open when the wind tarps are installed. The maintenance department is well organized and staffed, and maintenance supplies are accessible and inventoried. Much equipment are original to the the construction of the building in 2001. There are standing contracts with trained vendors to ensure the maintenance of boilers, pumps, and heating and cooling systems. Currently, the HVAC system is fully functioning, but some rooftop units are running at 50 percent capacity because one of the two unit compressors is not currently functioning. In some cases, this can lead to temperature variability across the building.

The school district has generally maintained logs of maintenance cycles to ensure proper operation. The eyewash stations are cleaned and fire extinguishers are checked on a monthly basis by the custodial staff. Additionally, fire extinguishers are inspected annually by an outside vendor. Teachers are required to electronically request repairs of equipment in SchoolDude, an online maintenance program. Most equipment is tagged and catalogued through SchoolDude. Major equipment replacements or facility repairs such as the floor in the Large Animal Facility are planned and funded through the long-range capital plan.

Staff and students state that the custodians work diligently to clean the building. Staff state that they are responsible for cleaning their desks and boards daily. The physical plant and environment of the school positively impacts teaching and learning in the school. As a result of the hard work of the custodial and maintenance staff to maintain the upkeep and cleanliness of the facility, there is a positive impact on the presentation of the school and gives the community a sense of pride.

## Sources of Evidence

- student shadowing
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- school board
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 7 Indicator 3

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## Conclusions

Suffield High School has developed a long-range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements. As new programs and services are implemented, the community provides appropriate funding. In developing the annual budget, staff accounting and class size reports are used to inform staffing decisions. The district's ten-year long range plan is prioritized each year and includes both facility needs, technology, and capital improvements. The long range plan includes rationale for building automation, outdoor basketball court ground improvements, repair of footings for front columns, refinishing of the Large Animal Facility (LAF) floor, family consumer science overhaul, furniture replacement, media center upgrades, bathroom partition replacements, outdoor athletic storage facility, HVAC overhaul, turf field replacement, parking lot repaving, track resurfacing, painting of the building interior/exterior, boiler replacement, and replacement of roof HVAC units. As a result of the long range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements, appropriate funding is provided to meet the needs of Suffield High School.

## Sources of Evidence

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

# Standard 7 Indicator 4

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## Conclusions

The school leadership team is actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget, but faculty involvement is inconsistent. The school and district implement a zero-based budget philosophy. Typically, department chairs begin developing the budget by considering the needs of their department, refer to the prior year's budget, and consider the need for new expenses for equipment or resources. New line items require additional explanation and justification. These budget requests are then shared with the principal. The principal compiles all department budget requests to prepare the school budget which is then presented to the superintendent. When budget reductions or revisions are made, there is limited opportunity for faculty discussion. Forty percent of the staff feel that they have adequate input in the budget process. Some departments report that there is limited communication from their chair before their budget is submitted. Once the school implements a formal process that allows all teachers to share budgetary needs with their department chairs and building administrators, teachers will have the tools and resources necessary to fully implement the curriculum.

## Sources of Evidence

- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 7 Indicator 5

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## Conclusions

The school site and plant adequately supports the delivery of high quality school programs and services. The school facilities provide the school community with a vast and diverse range of classroom programs, curricular activities, athletic spaces, and faculty work spaces. All classrooms have LCD projectors and classroom computers. Specific spaces for music, art, culinary arts, technology education support the delivery of these programs. The school has recently transformed an unused classroom into a "design lab" and converted a larger classroom into two smaller spaces for the delivery of math and English language arts intervention. Facilities specifically related to support the delivery of the agriscience curriculum include the greenhouse, large animal facility, land for cultivation, aquaculture lab, and floral refrigerator. Storage space across the school is fully utilized. There are plans to build an additional athletic storage facility outside to alleviate some storage constraints. There are sufficient teacher work spaces, classrooms, and laboratory spaces to support the academic needs of the school. Additionally, there are extensive areas inside and outside of the school to support the athletic programs. The common area, kitchen area, meeting spaces, administrative and support service offices, and work areas are appropriate. As a result of variety of facilities provided to students and staff on the school site, there is high quality delivery of school programs and services.

## Sources of Evidence

- facility tour
- teachers
- students
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 7 Indicator 6

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## Conclusions

The school site maintains up-to-date documentation that the physical plant and facilities are in full compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations. Records are maintained by the head custodian of all ongoing inspections of the school facility. The custodial staff participate in a yearly OSHA training program and all staff participate in mandated blood borne pathogen training. The building meets the acceptable standard for health requirements as there are no hazards to the student and staff population. All health licenses are current and posted clearly in the cafeteria. Announcements can be heard throughout the school although there are some locations such as the auditorium, school counseling offices, locker rooms, and cafeteria, where it is difficult to hear safety announcements. There are newly installed cameras in many areas of the school. Following the safety and security assessment in 2015, exterior bollards were placed outside the main entrance and ballistic film was put on the glass in the front entrance doors. Art and science facilities have also been upgraded to ensure ADA compliance. As a result of the school meeting all applicable federal state laws and of being in compliance with local fire safety and health regulations, the physical plant and facility provide a safe, positive learning environment for all students.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 7 Indicator 7

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## Conclusions

The majority of staff engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out to those families who have been less connected to the school using different tools and methods. Approximately 93 percent of the professional staff believe that the staff is actively engaging parents and families as partners in each student's education. Sixty percent of parents believe that the staff actively engages parents and families as partners in each student's education. All teachers use digital platforms to stay in touch with parents. The platform used by teacher varies from teacher to teacher, but all teachers are required to link back to Google Classroom. Teachers explain individual platforms during open house. Parents also have access to their children's grade through the parent portal on PowerSchool, a school information database system. Several teachers send out positive postcards for reinforcement of student work and behavior. Progress reports are mailed out at the midway point of each marking period and some teachers state that they send out additional progress reports to parents. Phone calls are the most common way for teachers to contact parents. The athletic director sends out messages through Suffield Athletics Twitter account and also through the Suffield High School Twitter account. Announcements also get posted on the school's website. As a result of the professional staff engaging parents and families, the school is effective in partnering with families in each student's education.

## Sources of Evidence

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

# Standard 7 Indicator 8

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## Conclusions

The school consciously develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning. Approximately 20 percent of the student population is involved in available programs offered outside of Suffield High School. These programs include Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts, Greater Hartford Academy of Math and Science, and Asnuntuck Community College welding, precision machining, and electronics programs. The school offers Early College Experience courses with University of Connecticut where students can also receive dual credit. These courses include English IV/UCONN ECE, Introduction to Individual and Family Development, Animal Behavior and Training, Floral Art, Advanced Floral Design. The agriscience program has multiple business and industry partnerships that provide students with co-curricular opportunities. Agriscience students are required to engage in a 150 hour supervised agricultural experience each year. Examples include purchasing and raising livestock for resale and working with local residents to design floral arrangements for weddings and special events. Special education students are involved in work programs within the community. Non-special education and agriscience students currently do not have opportunities to participate in internship opportunities. Teachers reported that the idea of a formal internship program for students will be brought to central office leadership for consideration. For example, these students work at the local Crossfit facility. Teachers state that many classes bring in members of the community for guest speakers and special programming. Students in social studies classes work closely with Suffield Emergency Aid to help residents in need. The local Chamber of Commerce also acts as a resource for the faculty. By deliberately developing productive business, community, and higher education partnerships to support student learning, authentic and relevant experiences are provided to the students outside of the school.

## Sources of Evidence

- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 7 Commendations

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## Commendation

The adequate funding for co-curricular activities

## Commendation

The school's physical plant, grounds, and facilities that are well kept and maintained

## Commendation

The long range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements

## Commendation

The variety of facilities available to support the delivery of high quality school programs and services

## Commendation

The school's compliance with all local fire, health, and safety regulations

## Commendation

The variety of digital platforms used to communicate with families

## Commendation

The productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships and the continuous development of internships by the faculty for the students

# Standard 7 Recommendations

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## Recommendation

Provide professional development on best practices for technology integration into teaching and learning

## Recommendation

Create and implement a formal budget development and revision process that correlates with the district's inclusive process that allows for full high school faculty participation

## Recommendation

Design and implement an internship program that will allow all students to explore careers with area businesses

# **FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

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

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

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

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

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

# **SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY**

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

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

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

# Roster of Team Members

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## Chair(s)

**Chair: Dr. Nicholas Spera** - Marine Science Magnet High School of Southeastern Connecticut

**Assistant Chair: Dr. Richard Sanzo** - New Fairfield High School

## Team Members

**Brendan Burgess** - RHAM High School

**Jaunice Edwards** - Bloomfield High School

**Mrs. Amanda Fagan** - Ledyard High School

**Arielle Fischer** - Danbury High School

**Christian Imperato** - Wilby High School

**Aimee Mack** - Brookfield High School

**Mark Olsen** - Thomaston High School

**Shawn Parkhurst** - Cheshire Public Schools

**Doreen Picozzi** - Lincoln High School

**Deb Pikiell** - Plainville High School

**Jennifer Racioppo** - Fairfield Warde High School

**Concetta Scarfone** - Naugatuck High School

**Christine Soverow** - Easthampton High School

**Kelly Stokoe** - Farmington High School