

New England Association of Schools and Colleges



Commission on Public Secondary Schools

Report of the Visiting Committee for

**Pomperaug High School
Southbury, Connecticut**

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The Distribution, Use, and Scope Of The Visiting Committee Report

The Commission on Public Secondary Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges considers this visiting committee report of Pomperaug High School to be a privileged document submitted by the Commission 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 Pomperaug High 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.

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 American and International Schools Abroad (CAISA), and the Commission on Public Schools (CPS), which is comprised of the Committee on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI), the Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools (CPEMS), and the Committee on Public Secondary Schools.

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

Teaching and Learning Standards

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of and for Student Learning

Support 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 Commission's visiting committee, and the follow-up program carried out by the school to implement the findings of its own self-study and the valid recommendations of the visiting committee and those identified by the Commission in the Follow-Up process. Continued accreditation requires that the school be reevaluated at least once every ten years and that it shows continued progress addressing identified needs.

Preparation for the Evaluation 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 Pomperaug High School, a committee of seven members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people. In addition to faculty members, the self study committees included school administrators, district administrators, parents, students and a member of the school board.

The self-study of Pomperaug High School extended over a period of 15 months from September 2012 to December 2013. The visiting committee was pleased to note that five students and one parent joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

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

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Committee

A visiting committee of 16 evaluators was assigned by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Pomperaug High School. The Committee members spent four days in Southbury, Connecticut, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students, and parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school meets the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented public schools and institutions of higher education, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Pomperaug High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 40 hours shadowing 16 students for a half day
- a total of 15 hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)

- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facility
- individual meetings with 32 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers
- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

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

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

School and Community Summary

Pomperaug High School (PHS) is located in Southbury, Connecticut, and serves the communities of Southbury and Middlebury, forming Connecticut's Regional School District 15. Located 40 miles southwest of Hartford along Interstate 84, the towns are suburban, residential communities.

With a combined population of 27,100 residents, the towns of Southbury (pop. 19,706) and Middlebury (pop. 7,394) are economically, racially, culturally, and ethnically similar. Both communities enjoy stable economic development, educated work forces, above average incomes, and have attracted Fortune 500 Corporations. Middlebury is home to Timex and Chemtura, while Southbury is home to IBM and Astrium Services. The work force of the region is predominantly professional, managerial, and skilled. The median family income is \$91,237 per year in Middlebury and \$83,804 per year in Southbury.

In 2012, the unemployment rate was 6.8% in Middlebury and 6.1% in Southbury. Five percent of Pomperaug's student population lives below the low-income level, as measured by qualification for free or reduced-price lunches. Industry has remained constant in both communities, without much growth since 2007.

Regional School District 15 is comprised of seven schools including one high school (serving grades 9-12), two middle schools (serving grades 6-8), and four elementary schools (serving grades K-5). Schools' locations are balanced across both communities. The total student population of Region 15 is 4,066 students as of 11/5/12. Pomperaug also supports an Alternative Education Program with 22 high school students. Approximately 17% of high school students residing in Middlebury and Southbury attend private, vocational, or technical schools.

Region 15 spends approximately \$14,150 per pupil per year. Although the CT Department of Education no longer ranks a district's net per pupil expenditure, Region 15 would fall in the bottom third when compared to other districts across the State. Connecticut's Educational Cost Sharing provides funding of approximately 9% of the district's annual budget, and federal funding provides an additional 1%. The remaining 90%, or approximately \$54,000,000, is funded by local taxpayers. Each town's responsibility is determined by its population. Since roughly 70% of the district's population resides in Southbury, that town funds roughly 70% of the \$54,000,000. Middlebury taxes account for the remaining 30%. In Southbury, the percentage of local tax dollars allocated to education is about 74%, and in Middlebury that figure is about 60%.

PHS has a total enrollment of 1,261 students, consisting of 607 females and 654 males. The school population grew significantly from 2005 through 2010 (+8.3%), reaching a peak of 1,418 students in 2009-2010, but has seen a decline (-11%) in recent years. English is the primary language spoken by more than 99% of this population. As of 11/5/12, the ethnic, racial, and cultural composition includes 16 African Americans (1.3%), 53 Hispanic/Latino (4.2%), 56 Asians (4.4%), and 3 American Indians (0.2%). The remaining 1,133 (89.9%) of students are White/Caucasian, not of Hispanic origin. Using the new calculation standard that defines dropouts as students who do not graduate with their cohort, the average dropout rate at PHS for the past two years has been 3.25%. The average daily student attendance has been 95.9%, while

that of the teachers has been 97.1%.

All students entering PHS are recommended for placement into core (general), academic (college bound), honors, or Advanced Placement (AP) courses at the high school. Seventy-four percent of PHS students are placed in the academic level, 15% in honors, 6% in AP, and 5% in core, which is being phased out. Approximately 12% of students receive special education services. PHS students are required to take 4 credits of English, 3.5 credits of social studies, 3 credits of math, 3 credits of science, 1 credit of unified arts, 1.5 credits in PE, and 7 elective credits for a total of 23 credits.

The school offers academic and extracurricular programs designed to meet students' unique learning and transitional needs, as well as future college and career interests. PHS has a Digital Arts and Sciences Academy to provide students with 21st Century skills through science, technology, math and the arts. Furthermore, identified "at-risk" freshman, often between 20-25 students from both middle schools, are placed on a Freshman Team to provide transitional support during their first year of high school. With regard to extracurricular activities, data from the graduating class of 2012 indicated more than 83% of the students had been involved in at least one activity or sport, including Model UN, Pawprint (school newspaper), Debate Team, Drama, Student Government, and the Gay-Straight Alliance. Athletics is a source of great pride, with 28 state championship appearances by our teams in the last ten years.

For the PHS Class of 2012, 77.3% of high school graduates attended 4-year colleges, 12% attended 2- year colleges, 1.6% continued non-degree seeking education, 3.5% entered the workforce, 1.8% joined the military, while the remaining 3.8% of PHS graduates chose to travel. Graduates of PHS select from among competitive and highly competitive colleges including Boston College, Bucknell, Yale University, U.S. Air Force Academy, UConn, Fairfield University, New York University, and all of the schools in our CT State College system. Locally, in an effort to develop an accountable citizenry, Pomperaug hosts the Foothills Adult Continuing Education Program, offering free classes for GED, High School Diploma, as well as world languages. Foothills also provides a number of non-diploma elective courses for adults, with a goal of fostering lifelong learning.

PHS has maintained a long-standing partnership with several businesses in the Southbury Business Association and Tribury Rotary. Fifty-five local businesses participate annually in Project Success, an annual program for all seniors designed to teach such skills as resume writing and interview practices. The PHS Career Center has established job shadowing experiences and student internships in workplaces such as Danbury Hospital (medical) and Long Meadow Elementary School (educational). Additionally, the school has partnered with Southbury Ambulance Corp. to produce a Mock Accident Scene to teach students about the dangers of drunken driving. Career speakers are made available to students on a regular basis and have included visits from news reporters, military personnel, entrepreneurs, and politicians. Lastly, all Practical Law, Civics, and AP Government students visit the Waterbury Court House for interactive experiences with the legal system.

In addition to the 218 students who took Advanced Placement Tests in 2012, 43 seniors received college credit through UCONN's Early College Experience (ECE). A small number of Pomperaug Students are enrolled in a variety of Naugatuck Valley Community College courses, including technology, hospitality, and criminal justice. Students attending Bristol

Technical School during their junior or senior years in high school often transition to postgraduate studies in trades such as automotive, electronics, and welding. Lastly, PHS continues to participate in teacher internship programs with local universities and colleges including the University of Bridgeport and Sacred Heart University.

Pomperaug students are recognized for academic achievement through the honor roll, department awards, National Merit Scholar Program, and the Superintendent's Award. Graduating seniors are honored at the annual Senior Awards Night, when an average of nearly \$185,000 in local scholarship money is awarded. Honor Societies include a total of 222 active members who conduct many community service projects such as Red Cross Blood Drives and Instrument Playathons. Student Leaders of all ability levels are recognized through involvement in the Link Crew and *Names Can Really Hurt Us* Program. Athletes are honored through sports awards, Southwestern Conference Teams, and the Scholar Athlete Program. Fine Arts Students are recognized for excellence through the Halo Drama Awards, Connecticut Music Educator Association Awards, and annual Region 15 District-Wide Art Show, hosted at PHS. Lastly, the *Caught Being Excellent Award* is given to students and staff who demonstrate random acts of kindness, and the *Student of the Month Award* acknowledges a broad range of PHS students achieving excellence in the domains of academic success, academic improvement, athletic accomplishments, and service to the school community.

Pomperaug High School

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Students, staff, parents and community members characterize the Pomperaug experience in one word more often than any other: pride. In our classrooms, on our campus and in our greater community, we take pride in our commitment to the following values:

- In our classrooms, we are committed to fostering academic excellence, independent and self-reflective thinking, and a curiosity to pursue lifelong learning in a 21st Century world.
- On our campus, we are committed to promoting respect, maximizing opportunities for personal expression, and facilitating a positive school culture.
- In our community, we are committed to developing responsible, active, and accountable citizens.

At Pomperaug High School, we believe that all students can grow as learners, build and enhance community, and conduct themselves with integrity.

Learning Expectations

The Pomperaug High School community expects that students will meet academic, social and civic requirements through the pursuit of our 21st Century expectations for student learning:

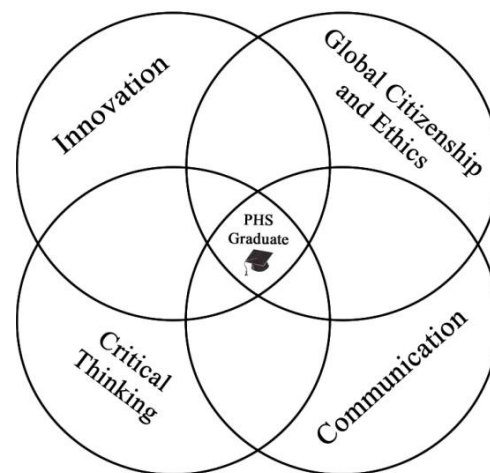
The PHS student demonstrates effective **communication** by interpreting language, revising ideas and positions relative to new understandings, and conveying facts, ideas, emotions, and concepts relevant to purpose and audience.

The PHS student demonstrates **critical thinking** by approaching topics with a healthy skepticism, pursuing solutions to challenging questions or problems, considering alternative perspectives, and conceptualizing, synthesizing, and evaluating information and experiences as a framework for belief and action.

The PHS student demonstrates **innovation** by exhibiting a sense of wonder and curiosity, an internal motivation to push boundaries and take risks, perseverance in the face of failure, and a capacity for producing novel ideas and products.

The PHS student demonstrates **global citizenship and ethics** by honoring the dignity and rights of all people, responding to the needs of the local community and beyond, showing an understanding of the social, cultural, political, environmental, and economic issues faced by citizens of the world, respecting the intellectual and physical property of others, making thoughtful decisions, and accepting responsibility for one's own actions.

PHS Expectations for Student Learning



**COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Teaching and Learning Standards

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

Curriculum

Instruction

**Assessment of and for Student
Learning**

1

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

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

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

Conclusions

The Pomperaug school community engaged in a dynamic, collaborative and inclusive process based on current research-based best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning. Pomperaug High School sent a letter to educational community asking for participation in the review and creation of the school's core values and beliefs about learning. A committee was formed that included four parents, three students, eight teachers, one assistant principal, one board of education member, and the Region's assistant superintendent and superintendent. The committee began creating the core values statement using several pieces of data which included their previous mission statement, a faculty survey, a 2011 status report on student achievement and core value statements from other schools. A draft document was written based on the committee's consensus that the focus of PHS's core values would be "pride." The committee also identified the following three themes as the driving forces for the document: a community that fosters independent and self-reflective thinking, a positive school culture, and the opportunities for all students to grow as learners. In 2012, revision of the core values and beliefs took place in order to make the document more concrete before presenting it to the entire faculty. The draft statement was brought to the faculty for review and discussion resulting in a few minor changes. While there was no formal evidence of the core values and learning expectations being approved by the Region's board of education, a member of the board actively participated on the committee. Since the process used to develop the core values, beliefs and learning expectations at Pomperaug High School was so inclusive, it has created a school community that is committed to the implementation of these core values and beliefs to guide student learning. (self study, 2011 status report documentation, teachers, parents, school leadership team, school board of education)

The school has identified challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students that address academic, social, and civic competencies and are identified by holistic school-wide rubrics that do not currently identify or measure targeted levels of achievement. The rubrics are designed to assess student achievement as a whole for each of the learning expectations. The high school has three of the planned four rubrics approved and disseminated for use in the school community. The approved rubrics include communication, critical thinking, and innovation. The innovation rubric has been released for feedback, but only recently has the faculty formally adopted it. The global citizenship and ethics rubric is still in development by the Standards Committee and, once completed and approved, may be used in conjunction with a capstone project for seniors. The Endicott survey responses from the fall of 2012 reveal that a majority of students (71.8 percent), staff (74.6 percent), and parents (85.2 percent) are familiar with, and in agreement that the 21st century learning expectations outlined in the rubrics are challenging and being used to assess their assignments and other class work. However, the Endicott survey responses only reference the communication and critical thinking rubrics. These rubrics were the only rubrics completed and approved at the time of the survey. Pomperaug High School has adopted "staircase" style rubrics based upon Bloom's Taxonomy. Teachers and students have raised questions about the implementation, use, and understanding of the school-wide rubrics. Teachers report that the rubrics lack clarity, particularly the numerical rating scale that is attached to each rubric. Some teachers report that they individually interpret the rubrics and have devised various strategies to convey to the students the expectations and competencies defined in the rubrics. Other teachers report that they alter the existing rubrics in order to make them more measurable for use in the classroom. This has resulted in inconsistencies in assessing student achievement of the learning expectations. When the school-wide rubrics include targeted levels of achievement, teachers will be able to assess student achievement of the learning

expectations using the same criteria, and students and parents will understand whether each student is achieving the targeted performance level. (classroom observations, student work, teachers, students, school leadership team).

The school's defined core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are consistently reflected in the culture of the school and are beginning to drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom. Pomperaug High School exhibits a myriad of examples wherein the culture reflects the school's core values, beliefs and learning expectations. The high school is committed to promoting respect, maximizing opportunities for personal expression, and facilitating a positive school culture, as well as developing responsible, active and accountable citizens. Students are given opportunities to become involved in co-curricular options such as Debate Team, Link Crew, the Gay Straight Alliance, Model UN, The Pawprint newspaper, the Robotics Club, Drama/Theater Program, *Abraxas*, the school's art and literary program, the PHS athletic program, and Mojo-2-Go Life Skills program. The school recognizes students and staff who epitomize the core values in different ways: during the weekly advisory program, Student of the Month, Panther Pride, and "Caught Being Excellent" programs. A copy of the core values and beliefs is posted in each classroom, with a visual organizer showing the PHS Expectations for Student Learning. It is evident that the vast majority is committed to fostering academic excellence, independent and self-reflective thinking, and a curiosity to pursue lifelong learning in a 21st century world.

The English department has begun to measure student growth as part of the summative portfolio assessment using the communications and critical thinking rubrics. Teachers use formative assessments to establish baseline data and to drive the curriculum. The Region 15 Summer Curriculum Institute has worked on revisions to humanities courses with increased emphasis on global and 21st century studies along with the incorporation of Common Core State Standards and the school-wide rubrics. In math classes, E-Commerce, physical education and forensics, as well as other courses that focus on 21st century skills, it is increasingly evident that the rubrics are used as part of their assessment. Curriculum work has not yet been funded for the unified arts, art and music to provide time/resources for revisions to ensure that the newly adopted core values, beliefs and learning expectations are reflected in those departments. Also, access to current technology resources is not equitable and poses an obstacle for all students to be able to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Since the adoption of the core values and school-wide learning expectations there have been some changes in school policies, procedures, and decisions at Pomperaug High School. The school has initiated an Advisory Program and curriculum, adopted a BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) technology program, installed SRBI (Scientific Research-Based Interventions), instituted a math lab, and formed professional learning communities (PLC's). The school counseling department had begun efforts to implement electronic Student Success Plans. Changes in policy, procedures and decisions driven by the core values and beliefs include student programs such as Link Crew, Freshman Team, Safe School Climate Program and the parent portal. The adoption of core values has helped change the culture to ensure that Spirit Week is a positive celebration of school spirit and pride. The redesign of this school-wide activity eliminated tagging and restructured the wall project to enhance school spirit and pride instead of grade level competition. Core level instruction in the humanities has been collapsed in order to increase the heterogeneity of students.

Resource allocations have been made in response to supporting the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and its 21st century learning expectations. They have included updates to technology and infrastructure; new science labs, science lab conversion, a Mac Lab for the Digital

Arts and Sciences Academy, netbook carts, whiteboards and laptops. The Region also implemented a plan to replace student lockers. The school has thoughtfully used a “locker bay” model which has relieved congestion in the halls and mixed grade levels in the assignment of lockers.

The PTO also supports and recognizes the efforts of students and staff. This includes teacher appreciation and staff lunches, modernization of the Black Box Theater, equipment for Construction Technology and science labs. Parents also provide funding and resources for the safe graduation celebration (Grad Nite) which supports core values and beliefs. Community funds have helped with the cost of renovations and upgrades on the athletic fields, new bleachers and a snack bar.

Student achievement is highly valued at Pomperaug High School. It is evidenced in the availability of the teachers in a common space (Resource Center), the SIP program (drop-in tutoring), SRBI, Math Lab, Mojo-2-Go program, TLC’s on PLC’s (National Honor Society peer tutoring program during PLC time), the number of students accepted into Honor Societies (222), the high percentage of graduating seniors (95%), the committed and dedicated staff, as well as the respectful and motivated students. The school is a community of learners with active engagement evidenced across disciplines and at every level. Pomperaug makes decisions on the basis of what is best for all students, in an environment of mutual respect. Teachers have the opportunity to collaborate with one another and assist students in the Resource Center. Students respectfully express gratitude that teachers willingly offer assistance, and remark that they receive help from teachers other than their own. Fully embracing and embedding the school’s core values, beliefs and learning expectations and making them the driving force for all policy, procedures, and decision-making will optimize and enhance curriculum revision, instruction and assessment and provide the best learning strategies in all classrooms. (self-study, panel presentation, district administrators, student shadowing, student work, parents, teachers, facility tour)

Pomperaug High School regularly reviews and revises its core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as on district and school community priorities. One year after the initial approval of the core values document, the faculty completed an analysis of core values and beliefs in May 2013. This analysis included a survey which established and guided the specific core values and beliefs that were still key for a successful Pomperaug graduate in the 21st century. After the May 2013 review, no changes were made. A plan is in place for annual reviews to continue as new trends, data, initiatives, and priorities may cause the faculty to reshape the core values document to remain in line with the school’s core values, beliefs, and expectations for 21st century student learning. The review process will use new data and documents found in student management software, the Region’s web site, and in the school’s online e-binder to assist in the review of the school’s core values, beliefs, and expectations for 21st century learning. Both faculty and administration acknowledge that the school’s assessment of learning expectations needs further development. Successful implementation of the use of the school-wide rubrics and collecting data from the implementation will provide the school with valuable data to guide decision-making processes and will enhance the teaching and learning environment. (school leadership team, self-study, teachers)

Commendations

1. The collaborative process used to develop the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations
2. The review of multiple sources of data by the committee while developing and reviewing the school's 21st century learning expectations
3. The implementation of new courses and programs that reflect the school's core values, beliefs, and expectations
4. The caring, supportive and positive culture of Pomperaug High School
5. The reflection of the school community's commitment to collaboration, communication and respect in the culture of the school
6. The consistent use of the core values and beliefs in the decision making process
7. The regular review and revision of the core values and belief statement

Recommendations

1. Review the school-wide rubrics to ensure that they are analytical and identify targeted high levels of achievement.
2. Ensure that the language of the school-wide rubrics is user friendly for staff and students
3. Provide training and resources for all departments to revise their curricula to reflect the school's core values, beliefs and learning expectations
4. Complete development and implementation of remaining school-wide rubrics

2

Curriculum

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

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

Conclusions

The purposeful design of the high school curriculum to ensure all students practice and achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations is limited; yet the vast majority of students practice most of the learning expectations due to a shared expectation amongst the staff that they will incorporate them into their courses. The school has identified four 21st century learning expectations: critical thinking, communication, innovation, and global citizenship and ethics. Teachers and students often expressed that the learning expectations are practiced and achieved in their classrooms. However, there is limited identification of the connections between course content and the learning expectations in the course curriculum guides. Changes in course offerings are not based upon data collected regarding the school's learning expectations. Some content areas, such as English, math, and social studies, have a clear understanding of the learning expectations they are responsible for teaching. Based upon a review of teachers' assignments and student work, there are multiple courses in multiple curricular areas that offer learning experiences related to critical thinking and communication. In addition, deliberate instruction provides students with learning experiences related to innovation and global citizenship and ethics. A systematic design of the curriculum, which delineates the 21st century learning expectations required in each course, will ensure that all students are given time to practice and achieve all of the learning expectations. (teachers, students, parents, self-study, student work, curriculum guides)

The curriculum is in the process of being rewritten in discipline-specific formats that include the common elements of concept-based units of study with enduring understandings, focus questions (factual, conceptual, provocative), concepts, content, and skills. To some degree, the curriculum includes the school's 21st century learning expectations, instructional strategies, and assessment practices that include the use of school-wide and course-specific rubrics. The school has curriculum guides for nearly all subject areas, including technical and e-learning courses. A review of curriculum guides shows that, for most content areas, the guides contain enduring understandings, focus questions, concepts, content and skills and follow the Erickson model of concept-based curriculum design. The format for some curricula is based on mandates from outside agencies. For example, the AP curricula are written in the formats required by the College Board, the Early College Experience (ECE) course curricula are written by the University of Connecticut, the Digital Academy curriculum comes from the State of Connecticut and the Virtual High School online course curricula are from outside of the Region. Two of the 21st century learning expectations, critical thinking and communication, are sporadically referenced in some curriculum guides. Teachers reported that assured tasks in each subject area are aligned to one of the school-wide 21st century learning rubrics. Instructional strategies and assessment practices are included in some departments' curricula. Ongoing curriculum revision work is charged with incorporating common assessments and the use of course specific and school-wide rubrics within the curriculum documents. The use of a school-wide curriculum template that includes essential questions, concepts, content and skills will create a strong correlation of expectations and experiences across the content areas and will assure that all students have opportunities to learn from best practice curriculum, instruction and assessment. (teachers, self-study, curriculum guides, central office personnel)

The Pomperaug curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through the pervasive use of inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking activities. Additionally, there are opportunities for students to engage in cross-curricular learning and authentic learning experiences, but they are scattered throughout the curriculum. Course

curricula are well-aligned to national and state standards, which commonly emphasize inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking. The staff's collective use of Erickson's concept-based curriculum design has driven the development of learning activities requiring higher order thinking. The emerging use of the rubrics related to the 21st learning expectations are also supporting the incorporation of inquiry and higher order thinking. Across the school, staff and students report that students are often assigned challenging tasks which require problem-solving and higher order thinking. Student work samples and classroom observations support this assertion. Cross-disciplinary learning occurs occasionally: formally in such places as the Digital Academy and the American Studies course, and informally in individual teachers' classrooms. Additionally, extra-curricular activities such as theater productions involve cross-curricular work. Likewise, there are occasional authentic learning opportunities embedded in the school curriculum, seen in field trips, the AP art gallery, and in the Digital Academy. Outside of specific courses, there are multiple opportunities for co-curricular authentic learning experiences that require students to make presentations to and perform for audiences outside the school include National History Day, Robotics Competition, Mock Trial, Model UN, Debate Team, Pomperaug Theater Company and All State Festivals. Students may apply for internships and job shadows at various professions and business including taxidermy, supermarkets and corporations. Medical internships in doctors' offices and at local hospitals are offered through the Education Connection. Policies exist for the ethical use of technology, and students are aware of these requirements. Across the school, students are given instruction by library media specialists on the informed use of technology, and systems are in place to prevent plagiarism. The use of inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking activities ensures students are well-prepared for the 21st century challenges they will face after graduating from Pomperaug. Creating the conditions to ensure that all students are exposed to cross-curricular and authentic learning experiences will encourage students to apply their knowledge outside of the classroom. (self-study, classroom observations, teacher interviews, students, parents, student work, curriculum guides)

There is alignment between the written and taught curriculum. There are systems in place to ensure the implementation of the written curriculum. The Resource Center, a second floor work space for teachers in the science, world languages, social studies, English, and mathematics departments, provides the opportunity for teachers to meet regularly, formally and informally, and share instructional ideas about the delivery of the curriculum. This regularly occurring but mostly informal collaboration facilitates the development and refinement of formative and summative assessments. Last year, Professional Learning Community (PLC) groups were established within departments to provide formal meeting time for teachers with one focus being effective delivery of the curriculum. Although feedback about the PLCs is positive, this year much of their time has been usurped due to preparation for the new model of teacher evaluation mandated by the State of Connecticut.

Formal and informal classroom observations by administrators in combination with pre and post observation conferences provide a structure to monitor that instruction is aligned with the written curriculum. The school is in year one of the new model for teacher evaluation, an additional structure in place to monitor the alignment of the written and taught curriculum. While this is another way to assess the alignment, some departments have shared chairs limiting the amount of monitoring that can occur. Groups of teachers are self-monitoring through the Resource Center and PLCs. The high school has twenty-nine State of Connecticut TEAM-trained mentor teachers who provide support for beginning teachers and assist them in delivering the written curriculum. According to the Endicott College opinion survey, 81.6 percent of the staff believes that there is a clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum, and only 1.8 percent of

the staff disagrees. The current systems in place to monitor the alignment between the written and taught curriculum need to be carried out with fidelity to ensure pure alignment. (central office personnel, self-study, teachers, Endicott survey)

Through the work of vertical curriculum teams and by the design of the high school Resource Center, curricular coordination and vertical articulation occur in most areas of the school and district. Staff reports and the documentation supports that curriculum review occurs continually in each department, rather than on a defined review cycle. District-wide, there are K-12 curriculum review teams in the core academic subjects which meet multiple times during the school year. In recent years, the introduction of the Common Core State Standards has spurred the vertical articulation of the math curriculum, and the Region 15 literacy portfolio. In addition, middle school and high school teachers meet twice each year to discuss the 8th to 9th grade transition, and administrators from different schools frequently meet. K-12 curriculum guides exist, outlining the content, skills, and major assessments taught in each grade level of each course. The guides are available to all teachers using the district intranet. The Region 15 Summer Institute, led by teachers trained in the Erickson concept-based curriculum model, is leading to a district-wide agreement about the curriculum development process.

At the high school, curriculum coordination occurs informally across the school. PLC time has been incorporated into the schedule, though it has rarely been used for curriculum coordination during this academic year. Department chairs which head multiple departments are limited by time constraints to facilitate curriculum coordination. However, the architecture of the Resource Center allows teachers to frequently collaborate to articulate their curricula, both within and across departments; indeed the vast majority of staff and students cite this as one of the high school's greatest strengths. Unfortunately however, this space is not available to all staff; the fine arts, unified arts, school counseling, and career center staff have offices elsewhere in the building. Formal and informal curriculum coordination and collaboration time for all staff will maximize opportunities for students to practice and achieve the school's learning expectations. (self-study, teachers, central office personnel, school leadership team, curriculum guides, facility tour)

The staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient in some areas and limited in others in their ability to fully support implementation of the curriculum, including co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities. An additional math teacher has been hired to support the introduction of the math lab for math remediation. The hiring of a second media specialist two years ago has expanded the services that the Media Center offers to students and staff to implement a research-based curriculum and to aid teachers with technology needs. Most basic supplies are readily available, but teachers report that a shortage of copy paper usually develops at the end of the year. Teachers often create and copy their own lesson materials to implement the delivery of the curriculum. Some departments, specifically world languages, are limited in delivering the curriculum because of lack of up-to-date textbooks that speak to the demands of the newly adopted Common Core State Standards. The library/media center offers a variety of resources to implement the curriculum: a large selection of database subscriptions, print and non-print resources, iPads, earphones, e-readers, computers, laser jet printers, a color printer, a conference room available for small group meetings, DVDs and video materials. While the Media Center does have display areas and tables and chairs to accommodate students, there are no collaborative work areas where students could work together with shared computer screens and areas where devices could be plugged in to create a 21st century learning environment.

Although the district has made an effort to stay abreast of technology needs, in some aspects the high school is limited with the technology resources to meet the demands of 21st century learning. All teachers have laptops with Power School and the building is Wi-Fi-enabled, but the laptops often lose their wireless connection. Technology availability was addressed in the last budget cycle with the purchase of 96 laptops for student use. A Mac lab was purchased for use by the Digital Academy. There is some availability of iPads from the Media Center for use in classrooms. The school initiated a BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) program in the fall of 2012 to ensure that each child would have a device. There is an inequitable availability of technology in the classrooms (i.e. projectors, SMART Boards) which impacts the implementation of the curriculum. The limited availability of equipment can result in the inconsistent delivery of lessons.

The facilities, resources, and staff that support the academic programs also support clubs. Despite its strong facilities for co-curricular activities, in the last few years, the demands on teachers' time has made it difficult to find staff to fill some co-curricular advisor positions, even the positions with stipends. Funding for many co-curricular club activities is supplemented by money from student fund-raising and club dues. Class field trips are mostly paid for by the students going on the trips. According to the Endicott College opinion survey, only 27.2 percent of the staff believes that co-curricular programs are adequately funded. Increased equity of materials, resources, and staffing will positively impact implementation of curriculum, co-curricular programs and additional learning experiences. (parents, department leaders, teachers, self-study)

In some areas, 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. The use of current research to drive curricular changes is pervasive, whereas the use of assessment data is sporadic. The Assistant Superintendent is responsible for district-level curriculum coordination and articulation. At the high school, department chairs are responsible for curriculum coordination. Time for vertical alignment is provided through K-12 curriculum teams. Time for coordination within and across high school departments is mostly limited to informal meetings, due to other demands on PLC time during the present academic year. That said, teachers across the school often assert that these informal meetings allow their active involvement in the process of ongoing curriculum development and review.

The district does not have a regular curriculum review cycle; rather, curriculum review is continual, and needs for curriculum revision are met as they arise. When the need arises, curriculum is formally revised through the recently created Region 15 Summer Institute. Led by teachers trained in the Erikson model of concept-based curriculum development, the Summer Institute serves to create a common process for curriculum development. In addition, Lynn Erikson came to Region 15 to train the entire staff in her concept-based curriculum model in August of 2012. Expenditures for curriculum revision were \$40K in 2011-12, \$43K in 2012-13, and \$49K in 2013-14. While professional development in the Erikson model is the primary research the faculty has used in the development and revision of curriculum, many other forms of research are used by teachers to inform their curriculum development; documentation shows that teachers have attended various conferences and reviewed professional literature. The use of data to drive curriculum revision is infrequent; there is documentation that CAPT results have been used to support changes in instruction, but most curricular changes are based on changing state or national requirements, such as the introduction of the Common Core State Standards. Data related to the achievement of the four 21st century learning expectations has not been collected, and thus has not been used to drive curricular revision. The vision to use a consultant for curriculum development is clear, and allows for a common language amongst the staff with regard to

curricular revision. Increasing the availability of and freedom to choose other forms of professional development will increase the staff's commitment to continual curricular improvement. (self-study, teacher interviews, central office personnel, curriculum guides)

Commendations

1. Resource Center that encourages teacher collaboration to promote curricular alignment
2. The investment in district-wide curriculum design based on Lynn Erickson's concept-based curriculum philosophy
3. Curricula which commonly emphasize inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking
4. K-12 curricular teams which strengthen vertical alignment
5. Resources of the media center that support the implementation of the curriculum
6. Teacher led efforts to implement the curriculum despite time and technology limitations
7. The authentic and cross-curricular learning opportunities in the Digital Academy
8. The alignment between the written and taught curriculum
9. The opportunities students have to apply their knowledge beyond the classroom

Recommendations

1. Construct a district-wide curriculum template using a common format that continues to include Erickson's concept-based design, the school's 21st century learning expectations for each course; instructional strategies; and assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic rubrics
2. Provide curriculum training to all departments and/or staff
3. Systematically design the curriculum, to delineate which of the 21st century learning expectations are required in each course
4. Ensure that all students are regularly exposed to cross-curricular and authentic learning experiences
5. Assess the time available to each department chair to coordinate and monitor the written and taught curriculum
6. Increase equity of materials, equipment, and resources available to teachers

7. Ensure basic supplies, such as copy paper, are available for the entire school year
8. Use local and standardized assessment results to drive curriculum evaluation and development

3 Instruction

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

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

Conclusions

Many teachers continuously examine their instructional practice to ensure consistency with the school's Core Values, Beliefs and 21st Century Learning Expectations. Teachers demonstrate clear knowledge about the school's beliefs about learning. The core values and learning expectations are consistently referenced when discussing instructional strategies like the culinary teacher guiding students to use senses such as taste and smell to determine completion/quality of product to ensure critical thinking and innovation; the accounting teacher using samples from actual businesses in town for instructional purposes on tax assignments to promote global citizenship and ethics. Teaching practices in many classes consistently and overtly support the learning expectations of critical thinking and communication. Teachers provide students with a variety of opportunities to demonstrate their ability to develop opinions and positions on topics such as technological advancement in social studies and memoir topics of choice in English 3 classes. In many classes students are expected to support their findings and opinions with evidence from a variety of texts and other sources. Teachers also make reflective revisions to assignments and expectations to increase the level of rigor, as evidenced in a ceramics class in which the teacher added to a past assignment requiring students to utilize additive and subtractive concepts in pieces of work. Teachers consistently report that they value the Resource Center as a means of informal discourse regarding the sharing of instructional practices. While Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) and the release of one duty per week were originally provide for the purpose of reviewing instructional practice and collaboration, teachers report that this time is currently being administratively directed as use for other initiatives such as developing student learning objectives, Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and the new teacher evaluation system. When teachers are provided with dedicated time, specifically for the purposeful review of instructional practices, sharing of strategies and collegial analysis of student work, alignment of instruction to the school's core values and beliefs and student achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations will be well supported. (teachers, Endicott survey, students, classroom observations)

Pomperaug High School's teachers' instructional practices consistently support the achievement of the schools 21st century learning expectations. While the results of the Endicott survey identify a difference in opinion between the teachers and the students regarding the personalization of instruction, evidence from a variety of lessons and assignments, as well as interviews with teachers, students and parents support that the learning experiences at PHS are tailored to meet the needs of students with varying abilities. Instructional practices such as allowing student choice for the method of presentation in the Genetically Modified Food Project in biology are evident in many classes. All students in grades 9-11 are expected to complete a portfolio in English class every year. Students reflect on their own achievement and also have the opportunity to critique each other's work as a culminating assessment. In one math class, students are asked to complete a self-reflection to the teacher regarding their individual strengths and needs to assist the teacher in developing a personalized study guide in preparation for summative assessments. Students are engaged in cross-disciplinary learning through integration of topics from one or more disciplines such as psychology and early childhood development, world language and history, and math and science. Classroom observations provided evidence of teachers guiding students to make connections between social studies and technology and literature. Teachers are engaging students in active learning strategies such as cooperative group work, student self reflection and real world applications such as

creating a Facebook page for a Spanish immigrant. In the “He Said/She Said” class students are expected to write a reflection piece on gender roles as defined through Disney Films. In an English 3 class, students were asked to complete, a free write on making connections between a current essay written by John McCain to Act III of the “Crucible.” Connecting teaching and learning to the learning expectations of Critical Thinking and Communicating are evident across disciplines. As evidenced through classroom observations and student work, teachers are employing practices that emphasize inquiry, problem solving and higher order thinking across subject and levels which are clearly supported in the written curricula.

While some disagreement exists between students and teachers as to the efficient integration of technology into instructional practices, the evidence and observations revealed that technology is consistently utilized to support instruction. Students in world language classes use translator applications on their phones and personal devices to assist with advancing their learning and understanding of conversational vocabulary. World language teachers and students utilize the language lab consistently. One student was able to download an audio copy of “The Odyssey” to assist him with independent reading activities. Teachers utilize the projectors that are available in just under half of the classrooms but to varying degrees. Some teachers report that the set up and shut down requires too much time that takes away from instruction. At Pomperaug High School student achievement of the school’s 21st century learning expectations is well supported by the multitude of instructional strategies used by teachers. (student work, classroom observations, student shadowing, teachers, students, parents)

Teachers at Pomperaug High School are consistently and purposefully making adjustments to their instructional practices to meet the needs of students. In many of the classroom observations, teachers were regularly checking in with students to gauge their understanding of the content being presented. Grouping of students within classrooms and teachers strive to maintain heterogeneity in the groups. According to the Endicott survey, 87.6 percent of students and 81.6 percent of teachers support that purposeful organization of group learning is occurring in classrooms. Students and parents reported that teachers make themselves readily available for extra help for students as needed. Students also reported that they appreciate the Resource Center as a place to meet with teachers during and after school. The math lab was identified as a valuable support for students because they can seek additional instruction from a math teacher in the lab. While there are a wide variety of instructional practices being utilized in the classroom, there was little evidence that teachers are strategically differentiating lessons to specifically help students learn the concepts and skills. Teachers at Pomperaug High School consistently employ research based instructional practices and consistently use formative assessments to monitor student comprehension. When teachers purposefully differentiate their instruction, using available data to understand the students’ needs and design instruction to be effective for the student as a learner, students will have access to a wide variety of learning opportunities that will assist them in achieving the school’s 21st century learning expectations. (classroom observations, parents, teachers, students, student shadowing)

Teachers individually and collaboratively improve their instructional practices by reviewing student achievement data from formative and summative assessments, examining student work and utilizing feedback from students and colleagues. Professional Learning Communities (PLC’s) and duty free periods once per week were purposefully designed to review student achievement data, examine student work, use feedback to reflect on student learning and engage in professional discourse focused on current research

based instructional practice. Teachers report that during the 2013-2014 school year, these meeting times have often been administratively directed to focus on other initiatives such as the new teacher evaluation process including the development of student learning objectives, implementation of the Common Core State Standards and preparation for the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) assessments. Results of the Endicott Survey reveal that 53.5 percent of staff believes that they have formal opportunities to examine student work to improve their instructional practice. While some teachers reported that CAPT data has been utilized to inform teachers' instructional practices, there was no documentation to support this. School wide rubrics, while in existence and utilized in a variety of classes, are not widely used for the purposes of assessing and modifying teaching practices. Teachers have created and are using common formative and summative assessments throughout content areas. The results of these assessments are shared and discussed to improve instruction. 78.9 percent of teachers responded on the Endicott survey that they are using data from these assessments to improve instruction. Teachers at Pomperaug High School consistently strive to improve their instructional practices through examination of student work including, but not limited to, formative and summative assessments and engaging in professional discourse. When PLC time is dedicated to the purpose of reviewing student achievement data and sharing instructional strategies, all students will benefit from the refining of what is taught (content/skill), how it is taught (process) and what they can use to demonstrate (product) what they know and are able to do as evidence of having achieved the school's 21st century learning expectations. (student work, teachers, Endicott survey, leadership team)

The vast majority of teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content specific instructional practices. 89.5 percent of teachers reported in the Endicott survey that they maintain expertise in their content area and in content specific instructional practices. The survey also reported that 54.4 percent of parents believe that their son/daughter's teachers maintain expertise in their subject areas and in content specific instructional practices with only 6.1 percent disagreeing. 84.3 percent of students reported that their teachers are knowledgeable about subject they teach. Faculty report membership in many professional organizations. These memberships afford teachers additional opportunities for content specific literature and conferences that can assist them in remaining current with best practices related to their subject area.

Teachers regularly reflect with their colleagues and also utilize peer walkthroughs that afford them opportunities to reflect on their own teaching practices and gain ideas from their peers. Many teachers voiced their support of this school wide initiative. Teachers also use student feedback to reflect on instructional practices. In many classes, students are asked by teachers to evaluate the course. Teachers use this student feedback to make changes that will engage students in learning while assist them in meeting learning expectations. By maintaining content specific expertise, observing peers and seeking feedback from students, teachers at Pomperaug High School are consistently reflecting on their work. This allows them to be better equipped to deal with the needs of their students. (Endicott survey, students, self study, teachers)

Commendations

1. The instructional practices that are aligned with the school's core values and beliefs
2. The personalization of learning for all students across the curricula
3. The variety of instructional strategies that emphasize inquiry, problem solving and higher order thinking
4. The opportunities for students to select topics for assignments and projects
5. The required portfolio for all students in grades 9-11
6. The cross-disciplinary learning opportunities for students
7. The teachers' ongoing adjustment of instructional practices
8. The engagement of students as active learners
9. The opportunities for student reflection
10. The availability of teachers for student support and extra help
11. The Resource Center that provides an informal opportunity for teachers to collaborate
12. The peer walkthroughs that provide opportunities to observe and reflect on instructional practices

Recommendations

1. Evaluate the use of PLC time to ensure that time is allocated for review of effective instructional strategies
2. Provide opportunities for further training on purposeful differentiation within the classroom
3. Examine the ways in which student assessment data can be made readily available to teachers for use in modifying instruction
4. Provide training and time for staff to understand and consistently use the school wide rubrics using clearly stated criteria

4

Assessment of and for Student Learning

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

1. The professional staff continuously employs a formal process, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.
2. The school's professional staff communicates:
 - individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families
 - the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community.
3. Professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.
4. Prior to each unit of study, teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed.
5. Prior to summative assessments, teachers provide students with the corresponding rubrics.
6. In each unit of study, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.
7. Teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments.
8. Teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.
9. Teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.

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

11. Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning.

Conclusions

The Pomperaug High School's professional staff is 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. In 2009 a Standards Committee was formed and charged with the task of reviewing the school's learning expectations, assessments, and tools for measuring student progress. Faculty members identified rubric development as the most important part of the process and began to review NEASC Standards, along with previous expectations for student learning. It was determined that Pomperaug would focus on four expectations for students learning targeting 21st century learning expectations: critical thinking, communication, innovation, and global citizenship/ ethics.

Along with the four expectations for student learning, a new "staircase" rubric was adopted by the faculty with indicators acting as scaffolds to build upon previous indicators. The steps of the staircase would depict the developmental process of the learners.

Development of the rubrics has included, and continues to include, opportunity for staff input and feedback. Drafts were shared and discussed at faculty meetings. Currently, school-wide rubrics have been finalized for critical thinking and communication. Rubrics for Innovation and global citizenship / ethics are still in the drafting and piloting process.

When the communication and critical thinking rubrics were finalized, department chairs and faculty members identified and/or created "assured tasks" linked to rubrics. It was decided that semi-annual assured tasks would be scored with the school-wide rubrics and reported formally to parents. As part of the curriculum revision cycle, 21st century skills are now embedded as critical components of Pomperaug's instructional practices and student learning expectations. The school's formal reporting process will be expanded as assured tasks are identified for use with the Innovation and Global Citizenship rubrics.

Student progress reports on the 21st century learning expectations will be formally shared with parents via PowerSchool by the close of the 2013-2014 school year. The rubrics are being utilized in English, science, social studies, mathematics, world language, career and technical Education, and Fine Arts. By 2014-2015, all four school-wide rubrics are planned to be fully implemented across disciplines and formally reported twice a year to both students and parents.

Most teachers are using the school-wide rubrics for assured tasks. There is some confusion among faculty about whether or not the rubrics can be tailored to a specific task. Pomperaug High School's professional staff continues to develop and refine a formal process to use school-wide rubrics to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. When all teachers have a thorough understanding of the school wide rubrics and consistently apply them to assess student learning, student achievement of the learning expectations will be accurately assessed and communicated to all stakeholders. (teachers, student work, school leadership team, self-study)

The professional staff at Pomperaug High School is in the process of implementing a plan to communicate individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families, as well as reporting the school's overall progress to the school community. In the spring of 2013, a standards based progress report was developed by members of the staff to communicate individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. The plan is for teachers to assess students on the 21st century skills and to enter their ratings into PowerSchool. A matrix has been designed assigning responsibility for the assessment of the standards on each rubric to specific departments and courses. The standards based progress report has recently been

posted on PowerSchool. Teachers will be reporting student progress on the 21st century learning expectations by the end of the 2013-14 school year. Beginning next year, students will be formally evaluated on the standards at least twice a year. These ratings will be communicated on individual progress reports scheduled to be published at the close of each semester. The plan is to collect data from individual student reports and to communicate the aggregate results to the school community through presentations done at Board of Education meetings and postings on the Region's website.

In addition to a formal, standards-based reporting system, professional staff communicates individual and school progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations through many practices. Many teachers are currently using the rubrics in a variety of ways in their classrooms and continuing their efforts to report progress on these rubrics to their individual students. Staff at Pomperaug High School also uses PowerSchool and Naviance to record and track student performance, student interests and student goals. The Naviance program is an instrument used to record and monitor Student Success Plans. Report cards are issued quarterly and progress reports are available mid- marking period. The region employs a comprehensive developmental school counseling paradigm that culminates during a student's junior year. During this year, counseling personnel meets with the students individually to review progress and plan a trajectory for post-secondary preparation. The PHS Counseling Department prepares and communicates an annual school report for the Region 15 Board of Education that contains data about graduation rates, post-secondary plans, competitiveness of colleges, and SAT ranges but has yet to report on achievement of the school's learning expectations. As soon as a plan to report on student progress in meeting the school's learning expectations based upon data from the school wide rubrics is fully implemented and reported to the school community, the school will have the necessary data upon which to revise curriculum and make meaningful changes to instructional practices. (school profile report, teachers, school leadership team, self study)

The professional staff at Pomperaug High School consistently collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data from year end grades and CAPT scores to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. Teachers use a variety of formative and summative assessments to review the progress of students. Staff disaggregates and analyzes data in many settings including department meetings, professional learning communities (PLC), after school wrap time meetings, freshman team meetings, student intervention team (SIT) meetings, and the strategic research-based intervention (SRBI) process. During these meetings, staff collaborates and discusses the review of student work. After analysis, patterns are identified and action plans are proposed to address areas of need for individuals or groups of students. Examples of responses to improve student achievement that come from data analysis include differentiation of instruction in classrooms, recommendation to School Improvement Personnel (SIP) tutoring, English department literacy conferences, recommendation to the math lab, or tutoring from the National Honor Society. Because some school-wide rubrics are still in the development phase and others lack clarity, teachers inconsistently review student work which has been assessed using the school-wide rubrics; however, teachers consistently use alternative means to assess student work. When teachers are able to assess student achievement using the school wide rubrics and analyze this data on a regular basis, they will be better equipped to identify and address any inequities in student achievement. (student work, CAPT data, math lab referral form, teachers)

Prior to each unit of study, the professional staff of Pomperaug High School consistently communicates to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed. Classroom observations

and student interviews have demonstrated that teachers consistently communicate the goals and expectations to their students. A component of the teacher supervision and evaluation process requires teachers to incorporate course specific performance expectations. Classroom teachers also consistently and effectively use task-specific rubrics that are aligned with course curriculum. Pomperaug High School is implementing the school-wide rubrics and plans to formally report ratings at least twice a year for assured tasks. The Standards Committee is working on the drafting and/or piloting of the final two rubrics, Innovation and Global Citizenship/Ethics, anticipated to be completed this year. Additionally, the 21st century learning expectations can be accessed both in the course catalog and the core values, beliefs and expectation tabs on the Pomperaug homepage. Combining the communication of course expectations to students along with the school wide learning expectations that each department/course is responsible for will establish a strong connection between the two and allow students to better understand the importance and values of the school wide rubrics. (classroom observations, student work, teachers' syllabi, teachers, students)

Prior to summative assessments, many teachers provide students with the corresponding rubrics. An example of this process includes a math project on quadratic regression in which students execute the task, reflect, and assess their work with the rubric. The art department uses a universal rubric in all art classes. The world languages department uses a rubric to grade students on oral proficiency. The science department has a rubric where students reflect on their own work with a space for teacher comments. The majority of teachers provide students with either school-wide and/or course specific rubrics that are used to assess student learning prior to summative assessments. This practice ensures that students have a clear understanding of the criteria to be successful on the summative assessments. (student work, teachers, students)

In each unit of study, teachers employ a wide range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments. The Endicott College opinion survey found that 93.9% of students responded that their teachers "use a variety and range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments." The math department primarily focuses its formative assessments on warm-ups, pre-assessments, standards-based assessments, and exit slips, while the science department focuses its formative assessments on lab work, pre-tests, lab analysis, and brainstorming activities. The social studies department's formative assessments link analyzing primary sources, organizing information, and drawing defensible conclusions. Summative assessments include a variety of responses to the unit's "big ideas." The English department's portfolio process requires students in grades nine through eleven to set goals and to conference with teachers a minimum of twice a year to review progress. The writing involved in the portfolio process provides for feedback including peer and teacher review prior to revision. Students complete logs measuring their progress on their goals as they work towards their summative reflection and final portfolio collection. The physical education department offers a list of formative assessments for their semester electives, ranging from creating videos and web sites to site visits and discussions. In the fine arts department, however, formative assessments tend to look slightly different than in other departments. As projects are assigned, teachers meet with students individually and in groups to monitor work and provide ongoing feedback. Similarly, varieties of summative assessments are utilized across all disciplines at the end of each unit and include a combination of short answers, essays, and multiple choice questions. There were a number of performance tasks from the fine arts, physical education and social studies departments, and a year-end portfolio from the English department. Each subject area gives midterm and final exams, although the English department's portfolio process serves as its final. On a school-wide basis, Pomperaug

uses quarterly progress reports, PowerSchool reporting, and standardized testing, including the CAPT, SBAC, SAT, ACT, and AP testing for accountability purposes. The regular employment of a wide range of assessment strategies provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills and the feedback they receive makes the assessment a true learning tool. (classroom observations, student work, Endicott Survey, teachers, student interviews)

Teachers at Pomperaug High School collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments. Teachers review and analyze data, create new assessments and modify current assessments, both formative and summative. This collaboration throughout the school year happens during department meetings, scheduled collaborative time, professional development, and PLCs. All departments utilize PLC time (twice monthly) for the creation, analysis, and modification of formative assessments. Teachers work collaboratively to develop summative and formative assessments based on both school-wide rubrics as well as course-specific rubrics. The science, math, English, world languages and physical education departments have created common assessments for specific courses within their disciplines. Based on the results of a faculty survey regarding PLCs taken at the end of the 2012-2013 school year, it was found that a majority of teachers use this time to make revisions, modifications and accommodations to their assessments and lessons based on student needs; only 25.5% felt they could use more time for collaboration. However this year, teachers report that some of the PLC time has been allocated for SBAC, NEASC, and teacher evaluation training. Based on the survey, 92% of teachers use data sources as evidence of student learning. 64% of the teachers at Pomperaug High School feel that they are given enough autonomy to accomplish work within their PLC meetings. Many teachers are beginning to regularly examine the school-wide rubrics to ensure they are meeting the student needs. PLC time dedicated to teacher collaboration on assessments and assessment data has been well utilized and supports the development of a variety of assessment strategies. (teachers, leadership team, faculty Endicott survey)

Many teachers at Pomperaug High School regularly provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work. Teachers use formative assessment practices to monitor and assess students' work. Students report that teachers give students the opportunity to hand in multiple drafts and are given the opportunity to improve their work based on both peer and teacher feedback. Teachers give students feedback on initial written pieces and then the students have the opportunity to revise the document.

Additional examples of student work revisions throughout the departments are evident. In academic and core level Algebra I, students receive regular corrective feedback on standards based assessments (SBAs) every quarter. Students are allowed to take the assessment multiple times, receiving feedback each time until they meet success on SBA skills. In English, students create portfolios which provide evidence of feedback, reflection and revision. According to the Endicott College opinion survey, over 60% of students at Pomperaug High school agreed that teachers correct students' work and give feedback in a reasonable amount of time, offer suggestions to improve work, grade work fairly and consistently, and return the work in a timely fashion. The timely, frequent feedback given to students allows them the opportunity to revise and improve their work. (teachers, students, parents, Endicott Survey, student work, classroom observations)

Teachers at Pomperaug High School regularly use formative assessments to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning. Students are given a wide variety of formal and informal formative assessments prior to the administration of

larger summative assessments by their teachers in all departments. The completion of formative assessments provides teachers with student performance feedback, which is used to modify the assessments and instruction if necessary. Various formative assessments are used as checkpoints to determine student application of new material and concepts, to prepare students for proceeding to larger summative assessments, and to adapt future teacher instruction in all departments. At the completion of these formative assessments, teachers review the checkpoint assignments – warm-ups, homework, class work, and quizzes – individually and with students in a whole class review. The review of formative assessments enables teachers to receive immediate feedback concerning student learning. This allows teachers to progress further in the curriculum or adapt instruction to re-teach content and concepts in a way that is more suitable to student learning. (students, teachers, student work, classroom observations, analysis of assessment data spreadsheets)

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, standardized assessments, data from sending schools, receiving schools, and postsecondary institutions, and survey data from current students and alumni. However, the data from individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations is not yet available. Pomperaug High School has developed not only processes but also a professional culture, including but not limited to PLCs and alternative collaborative times to review student work and systematically collect, analyze and respond to data about student performance. The assistant superintendent has initiated a more formalized process for analyzing and communicating about student performance on the state CAPT exams in reading, writing, math and science. Faculty members utilize the state CT Reports website to disaggregate data according to a number of different indicators. Categories related to population include students in general education, special education, ELL, free and reduced lunch, and gender. Categories related to sub-strand performance on particular portions of the examinations include Reading Literature vs. Reading for Information. At the beginning of the school year, the department chairs devote time within during department meetings and release time to further analyze the data from CT Reports and develop intervention strategies for improving student skills and performance throughout the school year. In an effort to better assess student capabilities, in the 2012- 2013 school year the Chairs initiated a systematic program for formatively assessing student skills in the major academic areas. Formative assessments based on past CAPT exams were administered in grades nine and ten. After each of these assessments, evidence of student work and performance data was collected and then analyzed at department level meetings to further confirm the effectiveness of previously applied interventions and to develop additional instructional approaches as necessary. The staff attributes a significant portion of the increased student success across all areas of CAPT last year to this process. In 2014 juniors completed the Smarter Balanced Assessment Tests in place of CAPT in the disciplines of English and mathematics. The collection and analysis of student work is not just limited to state mandated programs and assessments. Last year's introduction of PLCs and the wrap time built into the new teacher contract are allowing additional, communal time for teachers to work together to review student work, set consistent expectations, review school-wide rubrics in order to improve instructional practices, and develop instruction, curriculum and assessments that will help students meet these expectations. In addition to the school's academic programs, the PHS Counseling Department reviews survey data about student performance and preparedness after they have graduated into the workforce or gone on to

attend post-secondary institutions. PLC time, wrap time and department meetings have provided valuable time for teacher to collaborate on the analysis of a variety of assessments which is then used to adjust curriculum and instructional practices. (teachers, school leadership team, central office personnel, CAPT spreadsheets)

Grading and reporting practices are reviewed and revised by some departments to ensure alignment with the school's core beliefs about learning. Teachers in some subject areas communicate with each other about assessments and grades when they teach common courses. Although teachers provide grading rationales in a written syllabus at the start of each course, there has not been a formal review of school-wide grading practices in recent memory. Teachers have identified that some key topics for discussion including: What goes into a grade? What should be measured: skill vs. content, summative vs. formative, progress vs. achievement, differentiation vs. standardization, mastery vs. compliance? How would grading rationales differ between departments? What are common philosophical agreements about grades? According to the Endicott College survey, 48.4% of staff agrees that school-wide grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised. 63.5% of parents agree that teachers grading practices are aligned with the school's beliefs about learning. There is an emerging emphasis to include school-wide rubrics as part of the learning and grading process. All courses are aligned to one or more of the school-wide rubrics. The administration and technology department have configured a report through PowerSchool which will communicate student progress in the areas of the school-wide rubrics. When a formal, regular review process of grading practices is implemented (for courses and the school's learning expectations), instructional and assessment practices will be better aligned with the school's core values and beliefs. (teachers, school leadership team, Endicott Survey)

Commendations

1. The time provided to teachers during PLC's and wrap time to teachers for collaboration
2. The wide variety of summative and formative assessments used by all teachers
3. The clarity of expectations communicated prior to each unit of study
4. The well-established use of performance tasks
5. The timely and specific feedback to students
6. Multiple opportunities for students to revise and improve their work

Recommendations

1. Clarify the language and intended use of the school wide rubrics
2. Develop a process to collect, review and communicate student and school wide progress on the achievement of the school's learning expectations
3. Develop and implement a process to review grading practices regularly and align them to the school's core values and beliefs

Support Standards

School Culture and Leadership

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning

5

School Culture and Leadership

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

1. The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.
2. The school is equitable, inclusive, and fosters heterogeneity where every student over the course of the high school experience is enrolled in a minimum of one heterogeneously grouped core course (English/language arts, social studies, math, science, or world languages).
3. There is a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well 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.

Conclusions

Pomperaug High School has consciously and collaboratively created a safe, positive, respectful and supportive school culture. High expectations for all the individual groups within the school community are clearly delineated and communicated. Pomperaug High School annually updates, publishes, and distributes copies of a student and parent handbook which is distributed to students at the beginning of the year during an Advisory Period. A reading of the handbook's procedural information is required from both student and parent; a signed receipt is then returned to the school stating the student has read the handbook.

Discipline and attendance policies have been set by the Board of Education, and are consistent with Connecticut statutes. An increased effort over the last number of school years to hold students responsible for their choices is evident in the comparative data on disciplinary action from the 2010-2011 to 2011-2012 school years. The disciplinary data indicated increased incidents of class cuts and observations supported the findings of many students not in classrooms during class periods. Three years ago, a student passport system was implemented and five security guards were hired to improve security and assist in monitoring class cuts. According to the Endicott College opinion survey, 75 percent of students report that "I feel safe at school." The principal quickly and effectively communicates with faculty, students, and parents when major issues arise in the school as evidenced by the response when a fire alarm occurred during frigid temperatures during mid-term examinations.

There are a variety of programs designed to cultivate a sense of pride and ownership in the school. School clubs and organizations at Pomperaug High School address student interests and community involvement; the faculty functions as advisors to these clubs and organizations. The school has an extensive athletics program which has high participation. In the hallways, students' art is permanently displayed on the walls and ceiling tiles. The school community is supported through the academic, athletic and arts programs that involve all students through a variety of activities, trips, events and other programs which foster pride and ownership within the school. Tolerance and diversity are encouraged and supported through programs such as the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA), American Field Study (AFS), Asian Culture Club, and Interact International. Given the school's commitment to multiculturalism, students enjoy rich opportunities and demonstrate respect and tolerance for others.

According to the Endicott College opinion survey, 90% of staff and 88% of parents agree that "Teachers (the school) support(s) students in assuming responsibility for their learning," allowing students to take ownership and personalize their learning. Students are encouraged to reach their greatest potential within a supportive and conducive environment. In addition, students, parents and community members have the opportunity to participate in hiring committees and play a role in the decision-making process. The building principal works collaboratively with PTO members to instill collaboration between school and community. The school community at Pomperaug provides incentives for all students to be challenged and to excel through various ways, including the Honor Roll, Caught Being Excellent Award, Student of the Month, Mobil Good Citizenship Award, a multitude of scholarships and awards, a broad range of Advanced Placement course offerings and Virtual High School coursework. Through these means, rigor and high expectations are embedded in the school culture. Pomperaug High School students are consistently accepted at highly competitive colleges and universities. To date, the school uses several surveys to gather current data regarding school climate and student performance. These tools include: Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors Survey, The Student Climate Assessment, and a survey of the Freshmen Seminar. These surveys vary somewhat in terms of focus, comprehensiveness and purpose but allow for the

school and community to continue to grow and strive for student excellence. As a result of the multiple programs and initiatives Pomperaug High School has a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations. (self-study, parent meetings, school board meetings, Endicott Survey, teachers, students, panel presentation)

Pomperaug High School is equitable, inclusive and fosters heterogeneity where a majority of students over the course of the high school experience are enrolled in at least two heterogeneously grouped core courses. PHS has made a concerted effort to increase the number of heterogeneous core courses by collapsing remedial level courses in the humanities. All students have the opportunity to be in heterogeneously grouped core courses throughout the four years. Furthermore, all students have equal access to enroll in honors or AP courses. Seniors have the option to take senior English or AP Literature. During the 2013-2014 school year, 92% of seniors are enrolled in the heterogeneously grouped Senior English. This is a non-leveled, half year course, followed by another non-leveled half-year elective course. Honors and remedial levels are not offered as options for senior English. Additionally, more than 91% of Pomperaug students this year are fulfilling their state-required Civics Course by enrolling in heterogeneously grouped Participatory Civics or Practical Law Classes, while a small minority enroll in the AP Government alternative. As juniors, students have the opportunity to enroll in American Studies, a heterogeneously grouped class, in place of English III and U.S. History, which are both homogeneously grouped. Finally, all elective courses in non-core subjects are heterogeneously grouped, with the exception of the higher level AP courses such as Studio Art and Music Theory.

Based on the systematic phasing out of core level courses, Pomperaug has embraced an inclusion model in which all students have equal access to the curriculum and are expected to achieve the school-wide learning expectations. Students with learning disabilities have the assistance of support staff and special educators to meet these expectations.

As part of Pomperaug's academic, co-curricular, and school-wide initiatives, students are encouraged to explore multicultural perspectives, to show respect for others, and to demonstrate tolerance. World exchange programs, facilitated through organizations such as AFS and the local Rotary Club, allow students to interact with students from other cultures and from diverse backgrounds. Members from the world languages department have organized exchange programs with Spain and France as an extension of the classroom, and the art department has also traveled to and studied in Europe. Students are also involved in Habitat for Humanity, in a Big Brother/Big Sister program, in Jobs for Graduates, Mojo to Go, and in a Diversity Club. Through these means, Pomperaug provides an inclusive environment. While Pomperaug has made a concerted effort to increase heterogeneous groupings, there is a possibility that a small percentage of students could complete four years without experiencing one heterogeneously grouped core course. An equitable and inclusive school environment will provide all students with an opportunity to participate in heterogeneously grouped, core academic courses during their high school careers. (parents, school leadership team, self study, program of studies, teachers)

Pomperaug High School has an on-going advisory program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who is familiar with the student. The curriculum for the program is designed to assist in the student achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. Students participate in a weekly advisory for twenty minutes every Monday, allowing adults in the faculty to meet with the same ten to fifteen students over the course of four years. Some teachers report that the current scheduling of the advisory period limits effective relationship building. These advisory groups predominantly meet in

pairs, where two teachers co-advise two groups of students together. A full curriculum for the advisory was developed this year. Many teachers report that they would like to have input in the curriculum development for advisory and would assist in the distribution of materials to ensure that it is received in a timely fashion. There is also a program called Link Crew, which is a mentoring program between upperclassmen and freshmen. At times, these upperclassmen will run an activity with the freshmen during the Advisory period. Additional opportunities for adult members of the school community to get to know students include participation in the PTO programs and coaching roles. The advisory program assists students in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations by focusing on Pomperaug High School's "Core Values and Beliefs" document, participating in goal-setting activities, and addressing school climate issues. However, an ongoing evaluation of the advisory program with opportunities for teacher/student input would improve its effectiveness and build ownership of the program. (classroom observations, teachers, students)

The principal and professional staff regularly participate in professional development to improve student learning. There are three full and four partial days allotted throughout the year for the professional staff to formally meet. The evidence shows that the majority of this formal professional development is used for curriculum and assessments and is led by professionals from within the school for whole staff workshops or department based workshops. However, according to the Endicott survey, only 53% of the staff agreed that "The school's professional development programs enable teachers to acquire and use skills to improve instruction and assessment." This formal professional development structure allows for professional discourse, reflection, inquiry and analysis of learning. For example, after formal professional development about 21st century skills and their relationship to curriculum, the Standards Committee worked together to create school wide rubrics to assess students' competency in these skills. Teachers then worked in small groups within departments to create performance tasks that would be assessed using with the school wide rubrics. The physical education department used this knowledge and skills to design new electives where students can choose courses that best fit their needs and interests. This assessment and curriculum development demonstrated the ability of the professional staff to apply the ideas and skills from the formal PD to improve curriculum, instructions, and assessment.

The development of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) provided teachers with time to collaborate to improve student learning. Teachers have formal time (55 minutes) once every two weeks embedded in the school day to collaborate in a PLC. This was intended to give teachers time to have teacher driven professional discourse in small groups specific to their subject and student needs. However, this year teachers have been directed to use much of their PLC time for implementation of teacher evaluation, NEASC, and school wide rubrics.

There have been limited opportunities for teachers and professional staff to utilize resources outside of school to maintain currency with best practices. Teachers have participated in programs sponsored by professional organizations such as National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), National Science Teacher Association (NSTA), Bureau of Education Research (BER), and other curriculum design focused professional development. However, funding for these activities is inconsistent and comes from department budgets, the principal's budget or the central office budget. At times budgets are frozen and outside PD is no longer available. Teachers are sometimes denied outside conferences due to lack of funds and some teachers have paid for a conference with their own money. While the school offers many opportunities for professional development to improve student learning, the inconsistent allocation of funds has limited opportunities for all staff to access outside professional

development to maintain currency with best practices in their respective disciplines. (teachers self-study, school leadership team)

School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning, such as seminars, courses, workshops, and programs that are attended by administrators who supervise and evaluate teachers. These workshops cover a wide range of topics that have been identified as the Region's goals. The topics cover areas such as supervision, academics, and state educational requirements. The school is in the first year of the state of Connecticut's System, for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED) program for the supervision and evaluation of teachers and administrators. Many aspects of this program have not been developed by the state, or given adequate time to be studied or implemented. As a result school leaders are working to implement the program within present limitations. Effective management of this new program is evolving. Based on the current status of SEED implementation school leaders and stakeholders are actively developing practices to effectively execute research-based evaluation and supervision processes. (self-study, teachers, panel presentation)

There are continuous reviews of the master schedule to ensure effective teaching and learning according to the 21st century learning expectations. For the past two years Pomperaug High School's schedule has allowed staff time for collaboration with their departmental colleagues by providing seventeen PLC meetings each year. The schedule includes time for select groups to work collaboratively. Freshman Team teachers and school counselors are allotted one period per five-day rotation to discuss struggling ninth graders who participate in the freshman seminar program. Collaboration time is used to discuss differentiated instructional and behavioral strategies for these students. The Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences is another smaller learning community that promotes student-teacher collaboration through a web-based curriculum. The schedule allows teachers in the Academy to collaborate by grade level three periods per five day rotation. Furthermore, American Studies teachers have common collaboration time one period per day. In some cases, mentors and mentees are given a common period in which to meet. Additionally, each teacher is provided one extra period per week for collaboration. This was accomplished for the past three years by assigning teachers a duty for only four of the five days in the rotation. However, the opportunities for collaborations are limited due to schedule constraints of individual teachers. Based on a review of teachers' schedules, the opportunity for the majority of teachers to work collaboratively is limited to after school wrap time, which may also include time to work with students, Planning and Placement Teams (PPTs), department meetings, parent meetings, and committee meetings. Some staff members also report that the large number of different schedules is sometimes confusing and the administration has recently conducted a survey of staff and students to look into whether the schedule needs to be modified to better meet their needs. The organization of time generally supports research-based instruction and some professional collaboration among teachers to meet the learning needs of all students; however, scheduling constraints limit opportunities for professional collaboration for the majority of teachers. (teachers, self study, department chairs)

Teachers, students, and parents report that class sizes allow teachers to meet the learning needs of the majority of the students. The following are the approximate average class sizes in 2013-2014: English, 22; world language, 20; math, 24; science, 19; social studies, 22. Teacher case load approximate averages are as follows: English, 86; world language, 101; math, 95; science, 75; social studies, 107. Typical class sizes in other classes include: art, 13; music, 17; family and consumer science, 23; business tech, 18; PE/health, 15. The majority of core level classes have been eliminated which makes the groupings of academic classes more

heterogeneous in nature, however there is an increased burden on support staff meeting the needs of students requiring individualized instruction. While class size was raised as an issue by some teachers, actual class size and student load are adequate to allow teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. (teachers, students, parents, leadership team, data reviewed from student management information system)

The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. This is evident through faculty meetings, presentations to the Board of Education, and correspondence with parents and students regarding the programs Pomperaug High School provides to its faculty and students. As a representation of being rooted in the core beliefs and values, the principal presented a report to the Board of Education on the progress of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Students, faculty and parents learned of and participated in an anti-bullying program through various meetings and communications in order to maintain a safe and caring school environment as it pertains to the school's core values. The Principal created a committee consisting of administrators and teachers to reconsider the building-wide schedule with respect to its effectiveness in using available time and space to meet the needs of all of the students. The principal continues to monitor the effectiveness of the current master schedule through student and faculty surveys. Finally, the Principal, working with designated staff piloted the Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences to address the need for greater application of 21st century skills. The primary focus of the principal's time is student issues and informal teacher observations. Faculty meetings, led by the principal, generally focus on instructional practices that promote teaching and learning. Academic achievement is highlighted through a student of the month program and announced recognitions. Core values and school beliefs are posted throughout the building and utilized in all classrooms. Students and teachers are cognizant of the core values and beliefs. As a result of school leaders and the principal working together to provide instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs and learning expectations, staff and students have a sound understanding of what is expected of them as teachers and learners. (leadership team, teachers, students, self study, classroom observations)

To an extent, teachers, parents, and students are participants in decision-making, although administrators have the largest role. Teachers have opportunities to be involved in decision-making bodies and processes such as the School Climate Committee, Crisis Intervention Team, and Standards Committee. Individual teachers also have meaningful and defined roles as academic coordinators. The school has recently instituted a Faculty Council in an effort to increase faculty and staff input into the decision making process. Teachers have been observed, as a whole, to be compliant with decisions made by administration as evident in implementation of school wide rubrics. Teachers are surveyed for their opinions regarding the current schedule, identification and support of struggling students, and the structure and focus of PLCs. However, teachers report that the results of these surveys have not been fully shared.

Students have participated on some hiring committees and have played an important role in the decision- making process. Parents and community members are invited through electronic media to participate on hiring committees. Students are involved in many extra-curricular clubs that enable them to be contributors to the greater community. Some examples include Student Council, Interact Club, and Honor Societies. Students are given a variety of surveys in Advisory requesting their opinions regarding current programs, schedules and school environment. Parents are given surveys through e-mail requesting their opinions regarding budget priorities, school budget, calendar revisions and the lunch program. The

building principal works collaboratively with the PTO to implement programs and activities such as Field Day, Good Citizenship Award, and Grad Night.

Despite the opportunities listed above, according to the Endicott survey only 36 percent of students, 52 percent of staff, and 41 percent of parents agree that they are meaningfully involved and have defined roles in decision making that promotes responsibility and ownership. While teachers, parents, and students have an opportunity to participate in decision making many members of the school community feel disconnected from all aspects of the decision making process. When all stakeholders are consistently invited to become involved in meaningful decision-making roles, shared responsibility and ownership for school initiatives and student success will increase. (parents, students, Endicott survey, teachers)

Based upon review of leadership endeavors designed and/or implemented by teachers to improve the school, the evidence collected indicates that teachers voluntarily exercise initiative and leadership in order to improve the school and to increase students' engagement in learning. Teachers have the opportunity to participate in summer collaboration to review and implement curriculum, and seek opportunities throughout the school year to review assessment and instructional practices. Most teachers are eager to provide solutions to concerns and try something new. The new faculty council provides a means by which teachers can actively engage in reviewing school organizational practices and other school initiatives. Many teachers maintain currency through professional development and collaboration but funding is inconsistent and opportunities for collaboration are limited due to scheduling conflicts. Some teachers serve as instructional team leaders, disciplinary deans, and curriculum coordinators. Many teachers are also involved in mentoring programs and activities that require them to engage with students outside of the school day. Pomperaug teachers strive to exercise initiative and leadership that is essential to the improvement of the school and increase engagement in student learning. (teachers, students, panel presentation)

The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. The principal maintains a high level of communication between school-wide and district-wide administrators as well as with the Region's superintendent. This is evident through bimonthly meetings with the board of education, and superintendent. Additionally, the principal maintains contact with administrators in the school at bimonthly administrative team meetings. Furthermore, the Administrative Council meetings, comprised of administrators from throughout the Region, convene at central office twice a month. The content of meetings mostly consists of discussion of student learning and application of 21st century learning expectations. Regularly scheduled and frequent meetings ensure effective collaboration among all levels of administrators and are constructive in achieving 21st century learning expectations. (central office personnel, school leadership team, school board)

The principal is charged to articulate a set of ideals and beliefs regarding schooling, teaching, and learning and forging these ideals into a shared school vision. The principal is responsible to and serves under the direction of the superintendent and assistant superintendent. The Region 15 policy and procedures manual provides very detailed information regarding the principal's decision making authority. The principal's decisions are supported by the school board and the superintendent. The principal supports 21st century learning expectations by promoting initiatives such as PLC, development and implementation of school wide rubrics, and other professional development activities. The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient authority to lead the school by improving educational opportunity, working with students, selecting and developing personnel, maintaining effective relationships with the community, preparing budgets and maintaining funds and facilities which allows her

to support the teaching and learning needs as they strive to achieve the learning expectations. (self study, school board, teachers, superintendent, job description)

Commendations

1. The safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility and high expectations for all
2. The positive impact of the Passport system
3. The range and variety of co-curricular activities which support the learning needs of students
4. The opportunities that some students, teachers and parents have in the decision-making process
5. The commitment to student equity and access, including the enrollment of students in two heterogeneously grouped core courses over their high school experience
6. The focus of the teacher supervision and evaluation process on instructional practices and improved student learning
7. The variety of leadership roles and initiatives assumed by teachers
8. The positive impact of the collaboration and reflection, between the board of education, superintendent, and the principal
9. The strong sense of pride in school among students, staff, and parents
10. The implementation of the advisory program
11. Teacher leadership that increases student engagement and learning
12. Regularly scheduled and frequent meetings that ensure effective collaboration among all levels of administrators

Recommendations

1. Establish a consistent and equitable way to fund outside professional development year round
2. Examine the effectiveness of the advisory program

3. Provide the opportunity for all members of the school community to be more connected to the decision making progress
4. Continue to examine the organization of time in the daily schedule
5. Seek ways to share survey results with staff in a timely manner and apply them in the decision making process

6

School Resources for Learning

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

2. 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.
3. The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services.
4. Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.
5. 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.
6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

Conclusions

The faculty and staff of Pomperaug High School provide necessary intervention strategies for all students as needed. There are consistent and structured intervention strategies for identified and at-risk students. The Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) team has procedures in place and include faculty, such as counselors and teachers, related to the student in need to provide intervention strategies in a timely manner. The SRBI team meets weekly and is chaired by the school psychologist. Communication between SRBI team and administrators is inefficient as it was reported by the SRBI team that administrators do not attend the meetings and administrators report that they are invited and do attend, but the meetings are sometimes cancelled.

Student needs are also addressed on an individual and/or small group basis. An advisory program has recently been established to help students achieve the 21st century learning expectations and includes a written curriculum document. The Link Crew is in place to help ease the transition of the ninth graders into the high school setting and the Crew often helps to facilitate the freshman advisory. Freshman Seminar is a program implemented to identify students in need of extra support. The seminar allows students to meet with counselors for support services. Additionally, an offsite Alternate Education Program services at-risk students. An attendance secretary is used to monitor student attendance and truancy. Other services offers are Student Improvement Personnel (in the form of tutors), math lab and literacy lab.

Pomperaug High School provides regular and pertinent information to families through student handbooks, the Region's and school's websites, mailings, PowerSchool, school messenger (mass phone and email messages), the use of social media, parent meetings, 504 Meetings, and Planning & Placement Team Meetings (PPTs). The counseling department at Pomperaug High School utilizes Naviance, the department's webpage, PowerSchool, career related software, and college application software to deliver an effective range of coordinated services to each student. The utilization of various intervention strategies supports student achievement and success. Improved communication between the SRBI and school administrators will improve the coordination and delivery of interventions to students. (school leadership team, school support staff, teachers, student shadowing, self-study, facility tour, classroom observation)

After the SRBI team meeting, the counselors or school psychologist communicates with parents about the strategies and interventions that will be implemented. In addition to the SRBI team, counselors and staff regularly contact parents of students regarding individual student issues that arise from time to time. Other communication from PHS includes the school's website, which provides a variety of information regarding programs and services. Parent and student interviews confirmed that students and families know where to go or with whom to speak to access information about special services. School staff and resources are known and easily accessible to parents and students if needed. Referral letters for students in need of additional math support is sent home to parents. A list of community resources is made available to families through the student handbook, the health services personnel, and the counseling department. PHS utilizes a variety of methods to provide two way communication about available services to ensure that students and families can take advantage of services in a timely fashion. (parents, students, self-study, school support staff)

Technology is widely used within the library media center, and email is used to consistently inform the Pomperaug High School staff of newly acquired print and digital materials. The following is a list of currently available technology resources: Destiny Resource Manager; Follett Shelf (ebooks); Catalist Digital (audio books); Statewide Library Catalog (reQuest); Connecticut Digital Library; PowerSchool; VISION monitoring system; Google Apps for Education; School CMS (webpage development); #connectphs Campaign (“8 Apps You Can’t Live Without at PHS”); Microsoft Office; and iPad applications.

The media center’s web page is an information resource to students, faculty, and families. Media specialists use Twitter as part of their #ConnectPHS initiative. The media center provides 78 computers and 18 iPads to students for research purposes and the creation of digital media, as well as day-to-day class assignments. There are a variety of online informational databases that students can access both in and out of school, including Destiny Resource Manager, the Connecticut Digital Library, and JStor. Cloud-based applications such as Google Apps for Education (Drive, Mail, Sites, Calendar, etc.) help students meet the 21st century learning expectations. The school utilizes various technologies and methods for supporting each student's achievement of 21st century learning expectations.

In an effort to meet the needs of all students with disabilities, various levels of assistive technology are used. The special education staff and students use the following technology: iPads; Kurzweil, Bookshare, Dragon, and "Read, Write, Gold" - text to speech software; computers in every special education room; 10 new laptops have recently been added; communication boards for students struggling to communicate; closed caption television programs; Samsung 22" LCD Digital TV Monitor for laptops; Keys U See- keyboard for low vision; Zoom Twix Camera; Savin color copier for enlargements; slant board; 20/20 pens; enlarged writing paper; headphones; individual white boards; large low vision student clock; and large calculators. A meeting with a parent indicated the use of Bluetooth technology to assist a student with cerebral palsy to improve self-sufficiency and independence. Additionally, teachers were able to deliver all of that student's work online. The support services staff provides a variety of technology and programs to aid students in acquiring 21st century learning expectations. (school support staff, parents, facility tour, self-study, classroom observations)

School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who deliver programs and services to students and families. In the Endicott survey, 17.5 percent of freshmen, sophomores and juniors agree that they meet with their school counselor regularly. PHS currently has: one director of guidance who serves all seven schools in the Region; six school guidance counselors; one career counselor/secretary who organizes the college fair; one school psychologist responsible for PPT referrals, individual student counseling, SRBI chair, "Names Can Really Hurt Us" program, attending PPT's for sending districts, student testing and evaluations; a .3 FTE independently contracted school psychologist who conducts student testing; and one student assistance counselor contracted through Behavior Spectrum who meets with students in crisis and/or those requiring additional outside counseling. Additionally, there are two secretaries in the counseling department for clerical purposes related to the guidance counselors' duties. With a student population of 1,260 students, the case load for each of the guidance counselors is approximately 197.

In addition to the main high school, Pomperaug High School provides an off- site Alternative Education Program that serves approximately 20 students. There is no on- site counselor or school psychologist at this location. The counselors and psychologist at the high school are responsible for servicing the academic and emotional needs of these students. The self-study report indicates that the student assistance counselor at PHS is scheduled to visit the

Alternative Program once per week, but often misses the scheduled time due to issues which arise at the high school.

The self-study report states that the counseling department regularly provides a curriculum by hosting informational evening for families as well as classroom activities for students beginning freshman year. However, interviews with the special support personnel as well as with guidance counselors, confirm that there is currently no written developmental guidance curriculum. Counselors access students through physical education and senior English classes to address future planning including course selection and Naviance. Parent nights (i.e. Financial Aid Night, College Bound Junior Night) are free and help to aid parents with planning. Most of these evening and classroom programs address upperclassmen and postsecondary planning. The Freshman team model and the Link Crew program are positive initiatives to address the transition to high school for ninth grade students.

Through student interviews, it is evident that the counseling personnel engage students in individual and group meetings on a regular basis throughout the school year. School counselors meet with groups of students to develop class schedules in their freshman, sophomore and junior years. While individual meetings are held for freshmen and sophomores on an as needed basis, the majority of the scheduled group meetings and programs are held for the junior class. Programs focus on individual, educational and post-secondary needs. Juniors have one scheduled meeting to address graduation credit requirements and post-secondary planning; they are also seen on an as needed basis throughout the year. Seniors are seen on an individual basis much more frequently to discuss personal, post-secondary planning, including college applications, financial aid, trade school applications, military options as well as to review continued graduation requirements.

Evidence collected, including interviews with the special services support personnel and the board of education, as well as written documentation, demonstrates that the counseling staff collaboratively refers students and their families to community and mental health providers. Counselors work with the school psychologist, the community resource officer, the nursing staff, the administration, and at times the classroom teacher and the student assistance counselor when a referral to an outside agency is deemed necessary.

While the self-study report indicates that surveys are given to gather feedback for the counseling department, the surveys are not representative of the PHS community as a whole since they are only distributed during evening programs and to seniors upon graduation. Additionally, the results from the surveys are not clearly cited in an effort to improve counseling department services with the exception of changing the administered PSAT exam to the national Wednesday test date to accommodate all juniors and eligible sophomores. The school counseling services are sufficiently staffed to address the academic, career, and social-emotional needs of the PHS student body, however, a clear and equitable delegation of responsibilities and a written curriculum will improve effective delivery of the knowledge, skills and attributes that will assist students in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. (school counselors, school support staff, school leadership team, self-study, Endicott survey)

The nurses' office is staffed by two full time registered nurses and a support nurse. This nursing staff is responsible for emergency treatment, physical care, procedures, and first aid for injured or ill students. Additionally, the nurses act as liaisons for parents, students, physicians, therapists, hospitals, school counselors, and community agencies to ensure that all students are in compliance with state mandates and are receiving any appropriate program modifications or accommodations.

There is evidence of substantial ongoing delivery of preventative and direct intervention in the health services. Health services personnel refer appropriate students for postural, and/or eye exams, and conduct immunization and asthma surveys. There is significant interaction between the

school nursing staff and the counseling department. The school's health services personnel are in communication with various agents that provide referral services. These referrals are made after problems are identified and the necessary information has been gathered related to the student and/or family. These referrals may be made by verbal, written or e-mail communication with the appropriate agent/agency. All referrals that are not directly affiliated with Region 15 require a "release of information form," completed and signed by the parent/guardian. These referrals range from the Student Intervention Team to emergency health care. The health services effectively use existing technology to meet the medical needs of the school community. PowerSchool is used to maintain contacts and to update records. Information is disseminated to the faculty via annotations in PowerSchool and through health lists that are accessed on an as needed basis (e.g. field trips). Email is used to communicate with staff

Health services personnel reviews student health through various assessments conducted both in and out of school. Additionally, there are health assessments related to sports, physicals, and injury reports. PHS hires an athletic trainer from Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine of Southbury on a part-time basis. The school health services have an adequate number of certified and licensed personnel and support staff who provide preventative health services and direct intervention services as necessary. (facility tour, self-study, school support staff, teachers,)

According to the Endicott survey, 93 percent of staff responds that the school has sufficient certified, licensed library/media services personnel and support staff. The staff consists of one .6 FTE library technical assistant and two, full-time, certified library media specialists, who collaborate with teachers, parents, and administrators, in addition to maintaining daily operations. The library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices extensively across the school. According to the Endicott survey, 94 percent of staff agreed that library/information services personnel are actively engaged in the development and implementation of the school's curriculum. A "Menu of Information & Technology Literacy Lessons" was developed that combined standards in the field with the existing curriculum. This document was shared with teachers in the 2013-2014 year to integrate information and technology mini-lessons with instruction leading up to each department's comprehensive tasks, and was used "a lot" by the staff, according to the media specialist. The library media webpage provides students and teachers access to curriculum resources 24 hours a day. Library media personnel are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum and plans are in place to ensure all students have assured information technology experiences. Student work samples revealed the use of a health and wellness database, science and context virtual reference through the media center in a human biology assessment.

The library media center provides a wide range of print and non-print materials which adequately support the school's curriculum. According to the Endicott survey, 84 percent of students and 90 percent of staff respond that the library provides a wide range of materials, technology, and other information services to support the curriculum. The media specialists are currently in the process of removing, weeding, outdated titles and balancing the collection with purchases of both print and electronic resources. Additional resources that are available to both the staff and students for obtaining information include a large selection of ebooks and audiobooks, eReference books, etc. If specific information needs cannot be met by the PHS media center, resources are obtained through the Public Library System's Interlibrary Loan Service. Some of the hardware available to the staff and students include three computer labs, with 78 available computers, 18 iPads, cameras, USB microphones, headphones, charging stations, and Kindle ebook readers. The school encourages students to use their personal laptops, tablets, and smartphones. The media center, as well as the rest of the school, is wireless and provides students connectivity to the PHS network. There are numerous software packages available to the students

and staff including Microsoft Office 2007, and Google Apps for Education. The district and school leadership supports a strong library collection through a sufficient yearly budget. The resources, technology, and services made available to students and staff by the library services personnel adequately supports curricular and individual needs.

The library media center is clearly a welcoming environment for students and faculty to pursue 21st century learning. Students and staff have regular and frequent access to the media center's facility, programs, and services. According to the Endicott survey, 86 percent of students responded that the library is available to them before, during, and after school hours. The facility includes three computer labs and a conference room and offers extended hours to students fifteen minutes prior to the school day and two and a half hours after the close of school. Student interviews confirmed that the facility is staffed with two dedicated library media specialists and one library technical assistant from 7:00 a.m. - 2:50 p.m. A teacher, paid through a grant, supervises the facility from 2:20 p.m. - 4:50 p.m. There is a late bus for students that departs daily at 5:00 p.m. Additionally, data shows that the Media Center receives approximately 1,400 visits per day. When the library facility is booked by other classes, laptop carts are sometimes available throughout the building for students to access the library's electronic resources. The library media staff makes every effort to accommodate students and staff throughout the day.

The library media center personnel are consciously responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning. On a daily basis, the library staff assists individual students seeking answers to a variety of questions including database inquiries, software questions, citation formatting, printing problems, and password retrieval. Media specialists assist students in finding independent reading material through impromptu book talks, QR codes linked to book trailers attached to the inside of books, and book displays. Students receive instruction in and have access to the media center's web page and all its resources and programs. Using the Destiny Resource Manager on the web page, students can search through the library's extensive collection of print, ebooks, audio books, virtual reference books, and database portal pages. Ebooks and audio books are available for students to check out through Destiny or the media center's FollettShelf and Catalist Digital catalogs. The library's online databases can be searched from school or at home using the passwords shared with students on their Google Drive accounts. Within the media center, students have access to textbooks ("Textbooks on Demand") to aid in studying, as well as numerous school supplies and equipment including headphones, microphones, laptops, cameras, and iPads to complete projects.

The library media services personnel use various forms of assessment to improve the services provided by the media center so that each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. Data collected about the media specialist's use of time, as well as the number of student walk-ins, classes using the media center computer labs, and comparisons of library staffing in similar DRG towns supported the addition of a second media specialist to the library staff beginning the 2012-2013 school year. Circulation statistics and Titlewise Collection Analysis reports were analyzed to help with collection development. A suggestion book that allows teachers and students to make suggestions for resources, supplies and programs is maintained. Book purchases are made from student suggestions, and charging stations were added to the library to satisfy the requests of students and aid in the implementation of the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) initiative. These suggestions as well as additional student and teacher feedback is obtained through ACRONYM (Advocates for the Creative Reinvention of a New Youthful Media Center), a small group of students who survey and obtain feedback from the entire student community. The library media services are well integrated into the curriculum and instructional practices. Combined with the resources available through the media center, they are

able to support students in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self study, Endicott survey, teachers, students, school support staff, student work)

Based on the evidence collected, there is an adequate and appropriate number of certified support services personnel to provide inclusive services for identified students. Personnel includes: two part-time speech and language pathologists, twelve special education teachers, one part-time teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), three SIP tutors, and sixteen paraprofessionals. However, staff interviews indicated that there is an inequity in the balance of responsibilities for certified personnel.

Support services personnel regularly and effectively collaborate and communicate with each other and with other staff members to support identified students in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. Formal communications include 504 accommodation plans, functional behavioral assessments with behavior intervention plans, outside evaluations, psychological evaluations, IEP goals, PPT and end of year reports. Additionally, because the Resource Center is a common work area for most teachers, there is the opportunity for informal conversations between support services personnel and teachers. These conversations typically include discussions about assessment modifications, goals and objectives, suggestions of strategies to improve behavior and follow-up to notes from paraprofessionals.

Students participate in inclusive activities in and outside of the traditional academic day. Schedules show an overwhelming majority of students who require special services are incorporated in inclusive classes and programs with their non-disabled peers. Students are supported by the special service staff during this time by modifying the curriculum and by ensuring that students who require special services can fully access and participate in the general education classrooms. Numerous opportunities exist for students to become involved with activities throughout the school. Students work in the cafeteria with staff to assist in the creation and distribution of the school lunch. Non-disabled students volunteer with students to work with students to copy and deliver materials and supplies to teachers. Together, they run a school store and run a Mojo-2-Go beverage and snack delivery program.

Region 15 has changed the way students were grouped in academic classes, reducing the number of homogenous groups based on skill level and intellectual capability. In the 2013-2014 school year, the number of core level courses was reduced from twelve to four: Physical Science, Applied Geometry/ Algebra I Sequence 1 Part 1, Applied Geometry/Algebra I Sequence 1 Part 2, and Algebra I Sequence 2. There are no core level courses for English, social studies and biology, which means that former core level students are in academic classrooms. This was a deliberate change to provide a more inclusive environment for students to work toward developing 21st century learning skills. The self study reports that with the elimination of the core level classes, the paraprofessional staff is no longer adequate to meet the needs of all the students who require additional support. However, this might be more of a scheduling issue than a staffing issue.

According to the evidence collected, support services personnel consistently use both formal and informal assessments to improve services for identified students. Formal assessments include: Woodcock-Johnson III, WISC IV/WAIS IV, Key Math III, TOWL-4, Vineland, Conners Rating Scales and criteria-referenced tests. Support services personnel gather data from CMT/CAPT scores, student performance on midterm and final exams, and quarterly grades. As a result of the 2011-2012 CAPT scores, special education teachers formed PLC groups in English and math to discuss strategies to improve student achievement. Additionally, special education teachers shared strategies at departments meetings and discussed student work throughout the year. The TESOL teacher uses pre and post test data to inform acquisition of language skills. When the scheduling of support service paraprofessionals and secretaries is reviewed and analyzed, required

services will be more effectively provided and will allow all students to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (teachers, school leadership team, self- study, school support staff)

Commendations

1. The integration of library media personnel in curriculum design and instruction
2. The materials (print, technology and software) that fully support the implementation of the curriculum in the media center
3. The many inclusive opportunities for all students
4. The 24- hour access to media center resources
5. The preventive care and direct intervention provided by health services personnel
6. The provision of intervention services for all students
7. The establishment of the Freshman Seminar
8. The multiple media by which the school communicates with families
9. The favorable staffing levels in all areas of student support services
10. The provision of a daily late bus

Recommendations

1. Review responsibilities of support services personnel to ensure equity in assigning staff to support inclusive classrooms
2. Review and reorganize responsibilities of counseling staff to ensure that all students are seen on a regular and as-needed basis
3. Design and implement a comprehension counseling curriculum for grades 9-12
4. Seek a broader audience when distributing surveys for feedback on counseling services

7

Community Resources for Learning

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusions

The community and the district's governing body fully provide dependable funding for sufficient professional and support staff, ongoing curriculum revision, sufficient equipment, and sufficient instructional materials and supplies. However, they do not consistently provide dependable funding for a wide range of school programs and services, ongoing professional development, and a full range of technology support. The community and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for the students at Pomperaug High School (PHS) to have a wide variety of opportunities both academically and in co-curricular activities. In addition to courses offered in the core disciplines, Pomperaug students have access to a multitude of elective classes in the arts, career and technical education, and courses offered outside of the high school. The board of education funds an athletic program that fields teams in twenty-four sports at the middle school, freshman, junior varsity, and varsity levels; however, board funding for these activities is supplemented by a "pay-to-play" fee of \$150 per student per sport for the 2013-2014 school year. The PHS website shows that students have the opportunity to join one of close to forty clubs and organizations at the school. Students can also pay \$250 annually for the use of a parking spot. The proceeds from this parking fee are deposited into the salary account to offset, but not completely cover, the cost of security guards.

The professional and support staff totals have remained consistent with enrollment over the past several years. PowerSchool reports indicate that approximately one hundred twenty teachers have assigned classes this school year. Two years ago Pomperaug added a department chair for special education and increased the size of its mathematics staff in order to open a math lab for students needing additional instruction. In this same time frame, there were cuts in the number of teachers in the social studies, English, and physical education departments.

Budgetary figures for professional development and curriculum revision Region-wide show increases in both areas. Curriculum revision allotment increased 22.5 percent from 2009 to 2012 and professional development allocations increased by 59 percent but the staff development budget at the high school remained constant throughout that time. Curriculum revision usually occurs during the summer and is paid through the assistant superintendent's budget. Three full professional development days are provided by contract for teachers. Teachers can also request professional development days to attend conferences and workshops with the approval of administrators but the allocation of professional development funds is inconsistent. Teachers reported that release time was often granted when requested but payment or reimbursement for outside programs was not consistently available.

Teachers and staff members report that technology is underfunded. The Endicott survey reports that just 36 percent of staff agree that the community and the Region's governing body provide adequate funding for a wide range of technology support. Computers in the world languages lab were ten years old before they were replaced with refurbished computers last summer. A site plan shows that there are upwards of twenty large instructional spaces that do not have a mounted LCD projector. These spaces can be found in all departments, but a large number of them are in humanities classrooms. The technology department's equipment budget has not increased since 2010, and the school has worked with the PTO and a portion of the principal's equipment budget to add some mounted LCDs in the past three years. All classrooms currently lacking an LCD projector will be outfitted with one during the summer of 2014, provided that the budget is approved as written. A Bring Your-Own-Device (BYOD) initiative, presently under review, was instituted at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year to help give students more access to digital tools and resources for learning in their classrooms. The Region has provided technology outside of the school's budget. The Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences, a "school

within a school”, relies on gifts and grants from the area RESC, Education Connection, for the source of its technology funding.

In place of deploying a workstation in all classrooms, all teachers are issued a school notebook computer to use as part of their day-to-day routine. These computers are scheduled for replacement on a four year cycle. The Region provides the funds for replacement of computer lab and office computers targeting a six-year replacement cycle. Three years ago, through the assistant superintendent’s office, the Region purchased more than 150 netbooks and seven carts to use in classrooms. This year, the Region ordered ninety-six notebook computers to replace the netbooks because student and staff feedback indicated that they would be more valuable. Technology support and repairs are performed by a faculty member who also teaches three periods a day and another who provides support one period per day. Teachers mostly report being satisfied with having on-site support, but that assistance was not always immediately available. Additionally, some computers in the labs and on carts are in need of repair and some are not usable upon entering the lab or opening the cart.

The school budget provides funding for sufficient equipment, instructional materials and supplies. In their responses to questionnaires, most department chairs have not identified any inadequacies related to materials and supplies with the exception of technology; however, the athletic director and head of physical education program report that several requested supplies could not be purchased as a result of the budget freeze. Basic instructional supplies are readily available to staff in the school’s supply room system.

The CTE department relies on Perkins Grant funding for significant equipment purchases. Much of the funding for the equipment at PHS comes from the Region 15’s central office. Two summers ago, an additional science lab was built and an existing chemistry lab was renovated. PHS also received new lockers for students in the 2012-2013 school year. Teachers in CTE, media and technology, and fine arts generally expressed satisfaction with supplies and access to technology. The availability of dependable funding for most programs and services, professional development, and technology will better enable students to achieve the 21st century learning expectations. (teachers, students, parents, classroom observations, self-study, Endicott survey, budget documentation)

By design, the school develops, plans, and funds programs to ensure the proper maintenance and repair of the building and school plant; to maintain, catalogue and replace equipment; and to keep the school clean on a daily basis. The head custodian has scheduled meetings with administrators and representatives from the central office on the second Tuesday of each month to review the plan for building maintenance. PHS custodians and private contractors are responsible for the general maintenance of the plant. Documents provided by the custodian show annual service contracts for maintenance of the HVAC system, the fire and security alarms, the grounds, and equipment used to keep the school clean. Ordinary maintenance of the building and grounds is performed according to annual schedules. Items in need of repair are submitted to the head custodian via the online School Dude work order system. The head custodian then prioritizes and assigns the work orders to be addressed. According to the Endicott survey, nearly 75 percent of the staff agrees that needed repairs are completed in a timely manner. Students indicate that most repairs are completed quickly, but that some bathroom repairs can take longer than other areas of the building.

According to district policy all equipment must be catalogued and inventoried when it is received. A copy of the school’s equipment inventory is kept at the Region’s office and another is kept with the school’s bookkeeper. Each April, the Region orders an inventory of all equipment where new items are assigned a district asset tag and existing items are scanned and individually verified. As equipment is removed from use, the asset tags are removed and sent to the central

office so that the equipment can be taken out of inventory. According to the Region's technology plan, the target replacement cycle of a desktop computer is six years. However, the world language lab computers were not refurbished until ten years after their initial installation, at which point many computers were not reliably in working order. Close to 80 percent of the students who responded to the Endicott survey agree that both science labs and computer labs are in good working condition, however teachers indicated that often one or more computers in the labs or on the laptop carts are in need of repair and cannot be used.

The school is kept clean on a daily basis by a staff of one part-time and ten full-time custodians. Two custodians work during the school day from 6:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., one part-time custodian works from 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., and the balance of the staff works at night from 3:00 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. The primary daily cleaning takes place in the 3 p.m. shift. The custodial staff cleans the athletic fields and gymnasium after home events in addition to their work cleaning classrooms, common areas, and hallways. According to the Endicott survey, 66 percent of students, 82.5 percent of staff, and 85.9 percent of parents agree that the school is clean and well maintained; however, some faculty members have logged a high volume of School Dude requests for poor cleanliness in isolated areas including certain athletic facilities. The vast majority of the school is clean; however students report that bathrooms are often not at the same level of cleanliness. A clean and well-maintained facility positively impacts student and teacher morale and helps ensure that high-quality programs and services can be delivered. (Endicott survey, classroom observations, self-study, custodial staff, students, teachers, parents)

With the exception of technology, there are no long-range plans at this time to address future programs and services, enrollment changes, staffing needs, facility needs, and capital improvements. The current technology plan is limited in scope and covers only a three-year period from 2012-2015. It does not include planned upgrades to the wireless network and a one-to-one device program, both of which are desired by school and district personnel and are not currently funded by the budget. While individuals responsible for programs and services and staffing needs may have an understanding of what the school may need in future years, there is no formal written plan to document those needs. There is no written evidence of long-term planning for facility needs or capital improvements. While capital improvements are addressed, there is no evidence of a priority list of what needs to be completed over a multi-year basis. Because of this, there is no formal process to plan for areas of need for increased space or facility improvements even though some departments, such as school counseling and career services as well as physical education/athletics, indicate need for additional space in surveys.

In terms of the amounts budgeted for each of the last three years to support programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, and capital improvements, there is no evidence of a multi-year plan; however, some planning was verbally agreed upon through informal discussions at administrative meetings with central office. Written documentation of these plans does not exist. Examples of this would be the addition of one science classroom, as well as an upgrade to a chemistry lab. In the short term, the director of finance has allocated additional funding for capital improvements. This is evident by the phase-in of new lockers over the past four years at Pomperaug High School, as well as the addition of eighty security cameras and two new security guard houses. There is no evidence for predicted needs in capital improvements for future years. However, without any written, formal multi-year plan, decisions regarding programs and services, technology, enrollment changes, staffing needs, facility needs, and capital improvements are made in response to short-term needs rather than in furtherance of a long-term vision for the school. (self-study, school leadership team, central office personnel, technology plan, teachers, Endicott survey)

Building administrators, department chairs and teachers have input into developing priorities for the school's budget. Department chairs solicit budgetary needs from faculty in their departments. The Endicott survey shows that only 14.9 percent of staff feel that they have input into the development of the school budget. 64 percent of teachers feel they do not have input in the development of the school budget, and another 21.1percent is undecided. These results are mixed: some respondents feel they have a role, while others do not.

The Region's central office allocates a predetermined sum based on the previous year's budget to department chairs for expenditures. The principal works with department chairs in designing the initial budget plan, which gets modified throughout the process. While the principal has input in the budget process and can advocate for building needs, the superintendent and the board of education have the final word; further reductions without input from the principal and faculty may be made to the high school budget after the official process has concluded.

It is important to note that the school budget does not account for all monies spent on the high school; funding for certain items (e.g., technology, renovations to science labs) is often provided at the district level. The technology department's equipment budget has been at zero since 2010, but in that time frame, the Region purchased more than 150 netbooks and seven carts to use in classrooms through the assistant superintendent's office. This year, the district ordered ninety-six notebook computers to replace the netbooks at the high school.

The involvement of faculty and building administrators in the implementation of the budget has been impacted by budget freezes during the 2012-2013 school years. Several staff members report that during the budget freeze, some items that were planned for could not be purchased, while others have been delayed significantly. Widespread input and participation across faculty, staff and administration in the development and implementation of the budget will promote greater understanding of departmental needs to ensure that resources are allocated to support students in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, Endicott survey, teachers, school leadership team, budget documents)

The school site and plant mostly support the delivery of high quality school programs and services that foster 21st century learning. The media center houses a wide selection of print resources, three computer labs, and study space where students can work independently or collaboratively. It is available for student use during and after school hours. The high school has a full range of athletic facilities, including two gymnasiums, a pool and multiple athletic fields. In addition to the auditorium, a smaller performance space, the Black Box Theater, has been added. According to the Endicott survey, 78.9 percent of students believe the school's facility adequately supports its programs and services, and 82 percent of parents feel the school's physical plant is conducive to education. To a lesser extent, 67.5 percent of staff members agree that the school's physical plant and site supports the delivery of high quality programs and services. PHS has more than seventy classrooms. A well-staffed nurses' office is situated close to the counseling department, which allows health services staff to access counselors swiftly if need arises. However, one of the two private examination rooms in the nurses' suite is presently utilized for student health file storage. In recent years, one new science lab has been added and another lab has been renovated. Teachers across the departments often share classrooms and many are assigned to multiple classrooms; however, the Resource Center is a work area for most of the school's academic departments. In this space teachers have their own desks and space for files and they can work collaboratively. Additionally, students can meet with teachers there for extra help. The wide-variety and availability of spaces for collaboration, instruction, activities, and athletics help ensure that high quality programs are being delivered in furtherance of 21st century learning goals. (facility tour, teacher interviews, students, Endicott survey)

The school maintains up-to-date documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with fire, health, and safety regulations. It is the responsibility of the Region's director of facilities to maintain all documentation and to schedule all required inspections from local, state, and federal agencies. The documents are maintained in the director's office with copies available on request. Few issues have been identified during inspections. When issues do arise, work orders are processed in a timely manner. The Region works to ensure that its facilities are properly maintained and that they comply with federal, state, and local laws and regulations. This has helped to ensure that the plant and site adequately support all programs and services. A safe and accessible facility ensures that all students have access to all of the school's programs and services. (head custodian, facility tour, inspection/service reports, self-study)

Nearly all professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school. Ways in which Pomperaug engages and connects with families include a parent and student handbook as well as an Internet directory where parents can find information about important topics such as bullying, drug and alcohol awareness, parenting adolescents, and other academic information. Online systems such as PowerSchool and Naviance Family Connection allow families to gain access to their children's grades and progress in their classes, stay organized during the college planning process, and access information regarding college and applications. Both systems allow parents and families to be engaged in their children's education. In addition to these online options, PHS still issues hard copies of report cards that are sent home. Yearly events such as the Open House allow parents to meet their students' teachers, learn about what their students will be studying, and understand what the expectations are for each class. Students and their parents are invited to attend Financial Aid Night, where they can learn about the college financial aid process. According to the Endicott survey, 78.9 percent of the staff agrees that all professional staff engage parents in each student's education and reach out to less connected families; however, only 44.9 percent of parents who responded to the Endicott Survey agree with this statement. Personal interviews with parents invited to participate by the parent teacher organization (PTO) reveal a high level of satisfaction with school-to-family communication. When all parents, including less-connected individuals, are invited to actively participate in their students' education, a strong partnership will be created to assist in and support the achievement of student learning expectations. (parents, Endicott survey, parents log-on instructions, open-house invitation, parent/student handbook, self-study)

In some areas, the school develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning. Students have the opportunity to participate in many programs linked to higher education in order to engage in more advanced learning experiences, all of which reflect the school's core values. Students are able to receive high school and college credit by participating in the CTE Program at Naugatuck Valley Community College at their own expense. Students are also eligible to take part in the University of Connecticut's Early College Experience (ECE), a program in which students receive both high school and college credits for courses taken at PHS and endorsed by the University of Connecticut. The cost to earn credits is set by UCONN and varies from \$180 to \$230, depending on the amount of credits earned. Need-based assistance is available from UCONN directly. These opportunities foster academic excellence and encourage student to be independent thinkers. Ten-week after-school language enrichment programs have been offered for a fee, which allow students to be exposed to languages not offered through the world languages department, such as Chinese, German, Latin, Russian and Italian. The offerings in the language program are contingent upon student interest and availability of the instructor. Through the Program in International Educational Resources (PIER)

at Yale University and at their own expense, students can take language classes every week on the Yale campus from October through May, allowing them to enrich their linguistic learning experiences or allowing them to acquire an entirely new language not offered at PHS. Additional opportunities for learning are offered to students through the Virtual High School program, which enables students to take courses online. The annual College Fair brings representatives from more than eighty colleges and twenty technical schools to meet students and parents beginning the college application process.

Until the 2013-2014 school year, a successful partnership with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) allowed Pomperaug to host the annual Names Can Really Hurt Us Assembly for all sophomores and a large number of juniors. The program promoted a more positive school community by raising awareness of bullying and sensitizing students to its detrimental effects. This program will not run in the 2013-2014 school year due to scheduling conflicts, but the parent - teacher organization has offered to help fund a distracted driving program instead.

Until the 2013-2014 school year, the English department conducted the Project Success Program granting seniors the opportunity to select a job based on a description provided by a local business, at which time the students prepared a cover letter and resume. Members of the community came into PHS and conducted mock interviews with the students. This program is not running in the 2013-2014 school year and is currently slated for revision.

As part of involving students in learning communities, students at Pomperaug High School can participate in a travel abroad program. Last school year for instance, students from the world languages and art departments travelled to Europe and stayed with European families. The International Student Exchange program allows students to be immersed in the culture. Experiences abroad are enriching to the lives of students and develop them into global citizens who are more responsible, active, and accountable. These students are more sensitive to other cultures and protocols.

The school FIRST robotics team receives funding in the form of grants from seven community businesses. Additionally, two of the companies who fund the team also have representatives who provide support and mentorship to students. The Cooperative Work Experience (CWE) course allows students to gain additional credits for graduation if they work at least 100 hours per quarter. Students can choose to do a practical independent study. Depending on the number of hours students log, they can earn credits toward graduation. The students have to meet specific objectives in their independent studies, as provided by the supervising teachers. The annual art show includes over fifty thousand works from students throughout the region and attracts visitors from the community. Expanding partnerships with community resources and outside educational opportunities will ensure that all students have access to meaningful, real-world learning beyond the classroom. (self- study, teachers, administrators)

Commendations

1. The well-staffed and easily-accessible nurses' office
2. The Resource Center as a valuable facility for teacher collaboration and for students to meet with teachers
3. The recent renovation of one and an addition of another science lab improving the ability to deliver high-quality instruction
4. The number of electronic-methods of parent outreach programs and services
5. The custodial staffing and electronic system for submitting maintenance requests/needs

6. The recent phase-in of student locker replacement resulting in improved student safety, building appearance, and student morale
7. A clean, well maintained facility
8. Professional staff that actively engages parents and families as partners in their students' education

Recommendations

1. Increase funding for technology equipment to support the furtherance of 21st century learning objectives and core values
2. Develop and communicate criteria and process for distribution of professional development funding
3. Develop formal long-range plans that address future programs, enrollment changes, staffing, facility and technology needs, and capital improvements with input from key stakeholders
4. Ensure that the superintendent, high school administration, and department chairs collaborate on all significant changes to the budget, including a funding source, even after the formal budget process has ended
5. Investigate more opportunities for students to collaborate with and learn from the community in their coursework
6. Ensure that nurses have adequate space for private student needs

Follow-Up Responsibilities

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

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

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

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Committee has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Committee within sixty days (60) of occurrence any substantive change which negatively impacts the school's adherence to the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. The report of substantive change must describe the change itself and detail any impact which the change has had on the school's ability to meet the Standards for Accreditation. The Committee's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix on page 61. All other substantive changes should be included in the Two- and Five-Year Progress Reports and/or the Annual Report which is required of each member school to ensure that the Committee office has current statistical data on the school.

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

The quality of the Pomperaug High School Self-Study was excellent. The school community candidly evaluated each of the standards. In the process, strengths and needs were identified and some improvements are already underway. The visiting committee would like to express its appreciation to the district and school administrators, faculty and staff members, parents and care givers, and especially, to the students at Pomperaug High School for their hospitality and candor during our visit. Their collective efforts were of great assistance to the visiting committee.

Appendix A
**Pomperaug High
School**
NEASC Accreditation Visit
April 6-9, 2014

Visiting Committee

Cheryl Tutalo, Chair
Westport High School
Westport, MA 02790

Michelle Middleton
Enfield High School
Enfield, CT 06082

Raisa Bublick, Assistant Chair
Rocky Hill High School
Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Kimberly Noivadhana
Performing Arts Magnet School
Willimantic, CT 06226

Kelly Brooks
Montville, High School
Oakdale, CT 06370

Mary O'Reilly
Housatonic Valley Regional High School
Falls Village, CT 06031

Jody Ceglarski
Bristol Central High School
Bristol, CT 06010

Diane Parese-Holland
Farmington High School
Farmington, CT 06034

Matthew Filip
Amity Regional Senior High School
Woodbridge, CT 06525

Christine Perigini
Wilby High School
Waterbury, CT 06704

Stephanie Fletcher
Litchfield High School
Litchfield, CT 06759

Sheila Riffle
Old Saybrook High School
Old Saybrook, CT 06475

David Greenleaf
Bristol Central High School
Bristol, CT 06010

Michael Rivera
Shepaug Valley High School
Washington, CT 06793

Jamie Lang
South Windsor High School
South Windsor, CT 06074

Jacob Shutz
Mt. Greylock Regional High School
Williamstown, MA 01267

APPENDIX B

Commission on Public Secondary Schools

Substantive Change Policy

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 students with limited English proficiency

APPENDIX C

COMMENDATIONS

CORE VALUES, BELIEFS AND LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

- The collaborative process used to develop the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations
- The review of multiple sources of data by the committee while developing and reviewing the school's 21st century learning expectations
- The implementation of new courses and programs that reflect the school's core values, beliefs, and expectations
- The caring, supportive and positive culture of Pomperaug High School
- The reflection of the school community's commitment to collaboration, communication and respect in the culture of the school
- The consistent use of the core values and beliefs in the decision making process
- The regular review and revision of the core values and belief statement

CURRICULUM

- Resource Center that encourages teacher collaboration to promote curricular alignment
- The investment in district-wide curriculum design based on Lynn Erickson's concept-based curriculum philosophy
- Curricula which commonly emphasize inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking
- K-12 curricular teams which strengthen vertical alignment
- Resources of the media center that support the implementation of the curriculum
- Teacher led efforts to implement the curriculum despite time and technology limitations
- The authentic and cross-curricular learning opportunities in the Digital Academy
- The alignment between the written and taught curriculum

- The opportunities students have to apply their knowledge beyond the classroom

INSTRUCTION

- The instructional practices that are aligned with the school's core values and beliefs
- The personalization of learning for all students across the curricula
- The variety of instructional strategies that emphasize inquiry, problem solving and higher order thinking
- The opportunities for students to select topics for assignments and projects
- The required portfolio for all students in grades 9-11
- The cross-disciplinary learning opportunities for students
- The teachers' ongoing adjustment of instructional practices
- The engagement of students as active learners
- The opportunities for student reflection
- The availability of teachers for student support and extra help
- The Resource Center that provides an informal opportunity for teachers to collaborate
- The peer walkthroughs that provide opportunities to observe and reflect on instructional practices

ASSESSMENT OF AND FOR STUDENT LEARNING

- The time provided to teachers during PLC's and wrap time to teachers for collaboration
- The wide variety of summative and formative assessments used by all teachers
- The clarity of expectations communicated prior to each unit of study
- The well-established use of performance tasks
- The timely and specific feedback to students

- Multiple opportunities for students to revise and improve their work

SCHOOL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

- The safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility and high expectations for all
- The positive impact of the Passport system
- The range and variety of co-curricular activities which support the learning needs of students
- The opportunities that some students, teachers and parents have in the decision-making process
- The commitment to student equity and access, including the enrollment of students in two heterogeneously grouped core courses over their high school experience
- The focus of the teacher supervision and evaluation process on instructional practices and improved student learning
- The variety of leadership roles and initiatives assumed by teachers
- The positive impact of the collaboration and reflection, between the board of education, superintendent, and the principal
- The strong sense of pride in school among students, staff, and parents
- The implementation of the advisory program
- Teacher leadership that increases student engagement and learning
- Regularly scheduled and frequent meetings that ensure effective collaboration among all levels of administrators

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

- The integration of library media personnel in curriculum design and instruction
- The materials (print, technology and software) that fully support the implementation of the curriculum in the media center
- The many inclusive opportunities for all students
- The 24- hour access to media center resources
- The preventive care and direct intervention provided by health services personnel

- The provision of intervention services for all students
- The establishment of the Freshman Seminar
- The multiple media by which the school communicates with families
- The favorable staffing levels in all areas of student support services
- The provision of a daily late bus

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

- The well-staffed and easily-accessible nurses' office
- The Resource Center as a valuable facility for teacher collaboration and for students to meet with teachers
- The recent renovation of one and an addition of another science lab improving the ability to deliver high-quality instruction
- The number of electronic-methods of parent outreach programs and services
- The custodial staffing and electronic system for submitting maintenance requests/needs
- The recent phase-in of student locker replacement resulting in improved student safety, building appearance, and student morale
- A clean, well maintained facility
- Professional staff that actively engages parents and families as partners in their students' education

RECOMMENDATIONS

CORE VALUES, BELIEFS AND LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

- Review the school-wide rubrics to ensure that they are analytical and identify targeted high levels of achievement.
- Ensure that the language of the school-wide rubrics is user friendly for staff and students
- Provide training and resources for all departments to revise their curricula to reflect the school's core values, beliefs and learning expectations
- Complete development and implementation of remaining school-wide rubrics

CURRICULUM

- Construct a district-wide curriculum template using a common format that continues to include the elements of the concept-based design, the school's 21st century learning expectations for each course; instructional strategies; and assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic rubrics
- Provide curriculum training to all departments and/or staff
- Systematically design the curriculum, to delineate which of the 21st century learning expectations are required in each course
- Ensure that all students are regularly exposed to cross-curricular and authentic learning experiences
- Assess the time available to each department chair to coordinate and monitor the written and taught curriculum
- Increase equity of materials, equipment, and resources available to teachers
- Ensure basic supplies, such as copy paper, are available for the entire school year
- Use local and standardized assessment results to drive curriculum evaluation and development

INSTRUCTION

- Evaluate the use of PLC time to ensure that time is allocated for review of effective instructional strategies
- Provide opportunities for further training on purposeful differentiation within the classroom
- Examine the ways in which student assessment data can be made readily available to teachers for use in modifying instruction
- Provide training and time for staff to understand and consistently use the school wide rubrics using clearly stated criteria

ASSESSMENT OF AND FOR STUDENT LEARNING

- Clarify the language and intended use of the school wide rubrics
- Develop a process to collect, review and communicate student and school wide progress on the achievement of the school's learning expectations

- Develop and implement a process to review grading practices regularly and align them to the school's core values and beliefs

SCHOOL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

- Establish a consistent and equitable way to fund outside professional development year round
- Examine the effectiveness of the advisory program
- Provide the opportunity for all members of the school community to be more connected to the decision making progress
- Continue to examine the organization of time in the daily schedule
- Seek ways to share survey results with staff in a timely manner and apply them in the decision making process

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

- Review responsibilities of support services personnel to ensure equity in assigning staff to support inclusive classrooms
- Review and reorganize responsibilities of counseling staff to ensure that all students are seen on a regular and as-needed basis
- Design and implement a comprehension counseling curriculum for grades 9-12
- Seek a broader audience when distributing surveys for feedback on counseling services

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

- Increase funding for technology equipment to support the furtherance of 21st century learning objectives and core values
- Develop and communicate criteria and process for distribution of professional development funding
- Develop formal long-range plans that address future programs, enrollment changes, staffing, facility and technology needs, and capital improvements with input from key stakeholders
- Ensure that the superintendent, high school administration, and department chairs collaborate on all significant changes to the budget, including a funding source, even

after the formal budget process has ended

- Investigate more opportunities for students to collaborate with and learn from the community in their coursework
- Ensure that nurses' have adequate space for private student needs