New England Association of School and Colleges, Inc.

Commission on Public Schools

Committee on Public Secondary Schools

Report of the Visiting Team for Amity Regional Senior High School

Woodbridge, CT

September 22, 2019 - September 25, 2019

Mr. Garrett Dukette, Chair
Gregory Theriault, Assistant Chair
Anna Mahon, Principal

STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

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

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

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

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

Teaching and Learning Standards

Core Values and Beliefs About Learning

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of and for Student Learning

Support Standards

School Culture and Leadership

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning

CORE VALUES, BELIEFS, AND LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Teaching and Learning Standard

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

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

CURRICULUM

Teaching and Learning Standard

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

1. The curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

2. The curriculum is written in a common format that includes:
   - units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills
   - the school's 21st century learning expectations
   - instructional strategies
   - assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success, school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics.

3. The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through:
   - inquiry and problem-solving
   - higher order thinking
   - cross-disciplinary learning
   - authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school
   - informed and ethical use of technology.

4. There is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum.

5. Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.

6. Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.

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

INSTRUCTION

Teaching and Learning Standard

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

1. Teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.

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

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

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

5. Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices.

ASSESSMENT OF AND FOR STUDENT LEARNING

Teaching and Learning Standard

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

1. The professional staff continuously employs a formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics

2. The school's professional staff communicates:
   - individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families
   - the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community.

3. Professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.

4. Prior to each unit of study, teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed.

5. Prior to summative assessments, teachers provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success, such as corresponding rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement.

6. In each unit of study, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.

7. Teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments.

8. Teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.

9. Teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.

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

11. Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's

core values and beliefs about learning.

SCHOOL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

Support Standard

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

1. The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.

2. The school is equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

3. There is a formal, on-going program(s) or process(es) through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

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

5. School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning.

6. The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.

7. Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students.

8. The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.

9. Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.

10. Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning.

11. The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

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

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Support Standard

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

1. The school has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

2. The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services.

3. Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.

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

5. The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
   - provide preventative health services and direct intervention services
   - use an appropriate referral process
   - conduct ongoing student health assessments
   - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

6. Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
   - are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum
   - provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum
   - ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school
   - are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning
   - conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

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

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

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Support Standard

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

1. The community and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for:

    ○ a wide range of school programs and services
    ○ sufficient professional and support staff
    ○ ongoing professional development and curriculum revision
    ○ a full range of technology support
    ○ sufficient equipment
    ○ sufficient instructional materials and supplies.

2. The school community develops, plans, and funds programs:

    ○ to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant
    ○ to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment
    ○ to keep the school clean on a daily basis.

3. The community funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses:

    ○ programs and services
    ○ enrollment changes and staffing needs
    ○ facility needs
    ○ technology
    ○ capital improvements.

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

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

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

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

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

School and Community Summary

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Amity Regional High School, located in Woodbridge, Connecticut, is the comprehensive high school of Amity Regional School District #5, which serves the towns of Bethany, Orange, and Woodbridge. These towns, which are a part of New Haven County and located among the rolling hills and streams of south-central Connecticut, were settled by colonists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Although increasingly suburban, the communities honor their New England and rural roots (i.e., Boards of Selectmen, town boards, town greens, open fields, nature preserves, walking trails, reservoirs, county fairs, and historic homes). In addition, residents take part in the many cultural, educational, medical, entertainment, and business services available in New Haven, other urban areas of the state as well as New York and Boston to which they have ready access via Routes 1, 15, 34, 63, 67, 69,114, 243, 313, and I-95 and nearby I-91.

Bethany, Orange, and Woodbridge are regarded in Connecticut as desirable places in which to live. For example, niche.com assessed quality of life issues (i.e., education, economy, leisure, cost, and crime) for all CT towns and ranked Woodbridge at number 5, Orange at number 22, and Bethany at number 41 in its 2018 rankings. Median house prices exceed the state average of $269,300 (Bethany $343,500; Orange $382,300; Woodbridge $484,300). Positives include high rate of homeownership (85 to 90 percent), large lot size, low unemployment (less than 3.9 percent), and low rate of crime. The poverty rate is low for each town, ranging from 2.5 percent to 4 percent (compared to a state average of 10.4 percent). Approximately half of the population older than age twenty-five holds at least a bachelor's degree. The majority of the population is employed in professional and related occupations, management, business, financial operations, or sales and office positions. Many work for Yale University.

Despite their similarities, each town has its own character. Orange, the oldest (settled 1639) and geographically smallest (17.6 square miles), is the most densely populated (population - 13,941 residents) and the most commercial with rows of stores and businesses on and near Boston Post Road (Route 1). Approximately 1 percent of its residents are black, 87 percent are white, 7 percent are Asian, 3 percent are Hispanic or Latino, and 2 percent are other or multi-race. Among the three towns, Woodbridge is the most affluent. Median household income is estimated at $136,786 in Woodbridge, compared to approximately $106,400 in Orange and Bethany. Approximately 2 percent of Woodbridge residents are black, 75 percent are white, 15 percent are Asian, 5 percent are Hispanic or Latino, and 3 percent are other or multi-race. Most of the town's area of 19.2 square miles is zoned as residential to accommodate its 8,925 residents. The flatter, southeastern section of the town abutting New Haven is zoned for mixed-use and has smaller homes, light industry, commerce, shops, and assisted living centers for seniors. Bethany, geographically the largest of the three towns with 21.4 square miles and least populated (5,521 residents), holds true to its motto, "Rural is Beautiful." Approximately 1 percent of its residents are black, 86 percent are white, 6 percent are Asian, 5 percent are Hispanic or Latino, and 2 percent are other or multi-race. In addition to its farms and woods, Bethany is home to Laticrete, an international chemical company.

Each town has its own school system for students in pre-kindergarten through sixth grade. Bethany and Woodbridge each have one elementary school, and Orange has four. The pre-K-6 enrollment for 2017-18 in Orange was 1,175, Woodbridge 836, and Bethany 365. The Amity Regional School District #5 educates students in grades seven to twelve who reside in Bethany, Orange, or Woodbridge or who live in nearby New Haven and participate in ACES Open Choice program. The school also frequently hosts international exchange students, last year hosting a young man from Pakistan. Seventh and eighth graders who live in Orange attend the Amity Middle School in Orange, while those in Bethany and Woodbridge attend the Amity Middle school in Bethany. Students from all three towns attend Amity Regional High School for grades 9-12. The current enrollment for grades 7-12 in 2017-2018 was 2,216 for all three towns combined, of which 1,484 students attend Amity Regional High School.

The State of Connecticut, which classifies school systems from Group A to I based on education, income, occupation, and need of students' families as well as enrollment, has placed the Bethany, Orange, Woodbridge, and Amity Region 5 school systems in Group B, which includes the towns of Cheshire, Madison, Newtown and Simsbury. In 2016-2017, the Amity District spent $17,876 per student, compared to the statewide average of $16,592. According to the CT Economic Resource Center (CERC) and each of the district town's Approved Budget, in 2018, Woodbridge spent 59 percent of its budget on education, 30 percent allocated to the Amity District (Amity High School and two middle schools) Bethany spent 72 percent of its budget on education with 41 percent going to the Amity District, and Orange's education expenditures amounted to 66 percent of the town's total expenditures with 34 percent going to the Amity Regional District.

Of the 359 students in the Amity Regional High School Class of 2018, 348 (or 97 percent) graduated. The remaining 3 percent includes five transition program students who will continue off-site, one international student who was at Amity for only one year and five who did not graduate (1.4 percent), Three of those five completed their credits in summer school and two withdrew from Amity to attend the nearby Hamden Adult Education program. Over the past five years, the number of students in the Amity Region 5 District has declined from 2,469 to 2,330, a difference of 139 students. Of Amity Regional High School's Class of 2018, 317 students (91 percent) went on to attend four-year colleges, and 15 students (4 percent) attended two-year colleges or technical schools. Additionally, four students (1 percent) went directly into active military service while six students (2 percent) planned to enter the workforce directly upon graduation. Six students (2 percent) did not report their plans upon graduation. According to the 2016-2017 District Profile and Performance Report, the attendance rate for students was just over 94 percent, with chronic absenteeism at a rate of 5.1 percent for girls and 6.6 percent for boys. The teacher attendance rate for the same 2016-2017 year was 91.2 percent.

Extensive and varied educational opportunities exist for Amity students and community members with a long list of participating Greater New Haven institutions. The Amity Adult Education program offers both students and community members at large the chance to study a wide range of subjects from academic test preparation to photography to yoga. These courses are taught by both Amity Regional High School faculty members and community members. Hamden Adult Education program, in neighboring Hamden, CT, offers students the opportunity to earn either an Amity High School diploma or their GED in their night school program. Southern Connecticut State University, Yale University, and Gateway College all offer dual enrollment to our students at no charge, while the UConn ECE (Early College Experience) program offers students the chance to earn college credits while still in high school. Amity students may audition for and attend if selected, the ACES Educational Center for the Arts (ECA), which provides area high school students the experience of studying fine arts with practicing professional artists each afternoon while completing their required academic classes at Amity in the morning. Amity is a part of Open Choice, a reciprocal program with New Haven magnet schools, allowing students in either district the option of attending schools in the other. For students opting for a Vocational-Agricultural program, Amity students from Bethany or Woodbridge may attend Nonnewaug High School, and Orange residents may attend Trumbull High School's Vo-Ag program. Amity students may also attend Emmett O'Brien and Platt Technical Schools as well as the Sound School in New Haven.

Amity Regional High School has forged partnerships with many area businesses in a number of ways, but primarily through our Senior Service Learning Program. In the graduating Class of 2018, 197 of 359 (55 percent) participated in this program that allows seniors in good academic standing the opportunity to gain on-site, unpaid work experience in a field of their interest, generally in the nearby community. Students, however, have traveled as far as Los Angeles, California, and Israel for their work experiences. Some examples of local businesses at which our students have been placed include Laticrete (manufacturer marketer of green flooring and facade materials, used in residential, commercial and industrial applications), Rehab Associates, Yale University, doctor's offices, a local radio station, local elementary schools, and a long list of others. Amity hosts an annual Career Fair for sophomores, inviting presenters from local businesses and professions to address students about their respective fields. Business partnerships also benefit our many fundraising efforts including The National Art Honor Society's Empty Bowls which raises money for a local soup kitchen, the Red Cross Blood Drive hosted by our National Honor Society, the American Cancer Society Relay for Life at which many of our school clubs, teams, and organizations participate, and our annual Student Government Clothing Drive.

Amity Regional High School has fostered many ongoing partnerships with colleges in the greater New Haven

area. The counseling department sponsors visits from college representatives nationwide during the school day throughout the year as well as a College Fair one evening each spring to which over 150 colleges send representatives. An on-site admission day takes place once each year, offering students an interview with an immediate, on-the-spot acceptance to several local colleges. Teachers frequently reach out to faculty from community schools as speakers in their classrooms, the school's media center, the black box theater, or lecture hall. The Jamie A. Hulley Arts Foundation is a frequent sponsor of these presentations. In the fall of 2018, speakers from Quinnipiac University, Southern CT State University, and Yale University participated in our Day of Dialogue About Race and Diversity. Southern CT State University (SCSU) has recently begun a Free Visiting Professors program with a long list of offerings. Several Amity teachers have taken advantage of this program, inviting SCSU professors into their classrooms. Journalism students have also attended a conference at SCSU each fall.

Amity Regional High School recognizes students throughout the year for their academic, artistic, and athletic achievements, as well as for their social and civic growth and accomplishments. Throughout the year, Superintendent's Awards are given to students selected for their contributions to the Amity community. The Rotary Club also recognizes a Student of the Month. Each spring, Amity Regional High School holds two separate Awards Nights -- one for seniors and one for underclassmen. At these events, community scholarships, university book awards, and school recognitions are announced and distributed. Teachers in most content areas select students across academic levels for their accomplishments, but also their attitude, effort, and personal improvement. Teachers are periodically invited to select a student whom they would like to recognize with a note commending them for their exceptional social- or civic-mindedness aligned to the school's core values and beliefs. In 2018-2019, our advisory program, Spartan Seminar, invited advisors to recognize students in their advisory groups who have excelled in the civic and social domains. Each spring, six graduating seniors are selected to be featured in the *New Haven Register* in their Senior Spotlight. We have a range of honor societies in the World Languages, Science, Visual, and Theater Arts. Each honor society holds an induction ceremony annually. More informally, but woven into the fabric of Amity's culture, individual teachers often email the faculty with student achievements at such events as inter-scholastic debates, science symposia, writing, or musical competitions in order that the faculty might congratulate those students individually. Amity student-athletes are recognized in a number of ways throughout the year, ending with numerous sports banquets and awards ceremonies. The accomplishments of distinguished alumni are displayed on banners in the gym, trophies in the cases in our main hall, and on plaques in our Hall of Honor and Athletic Hall of Fame.

District Profile and Performance Report 2016-2017

http://edsight.ct.gov/Output/District/HighSchool/2050012_201617.pdf

Connecticut Economic Resource Center Town Profile Reports

Bethany: https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/cerc-pdfs/2018/bethany-2018.pdf

Orange: https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/cerc-pdfs/2018/orange-2018.pdf

Woodbridge:https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/cerc-pdfs/2018/woodbridge-2018.pdf

College Admissions Profile 2018-2019:

http://amityregion5org.finalsite.com/uploaded/ARHS_School_Info/ARHS_DEPARTMENTS/ARHS_COUNSELING/SCHO

Special Programs List:

https://www.amityregion5.org/arhs/departments/counseling-services/special-programs

Related Files

Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations

Amity Regional High School

Core Beliefs, Mission, and Expectations for Learning

Core Beliefs

The Amity Regional High School community is dedicated to three overarching principles that guide our beliefs and actions. We are committed to developing:

FAIRNESS RESPECT PASSION

Compassion Collaboration Persistence

Integrity Communication Inspiration

Mission Statement

The mission of Amity Regional High School is to create an inclusive community that affirms the contributions, strengths, and talents of all of its members. We bear a responsibility to ourselves and to the school community to develop in all students the skills and the desire necessary to become contributing members of a just society.

To accomplish this mission, we are committed to developing creative skills and critical thinking in all of our students through the following learning expectations:

Academic

- Students will demonstrate the ability to effectively read a range of texts with varying complexity.
- Students will produce and distribute a variety of writing designed to entertain, inform, or argue, as well build and present knowledge derived from research.
- Students will speak and listen effectively in order to comprehend ideas and information, collaborate, and present knowledge and ideas to a variety of audiences.
- Students will demonstrate a command of language convention through effective use of language in writing and speaking, and through the acquisition and use of domain-specific and academic vocabulary.
- Students will make sense of problems and persevere when solving them.
- Students will use appropriate tools strategically to solve problems.

Social

- Students will respect the rights, property and opinions of others.
- Students will regularly give to others unselfishly and be considerate and kind to all.
- Students will be aware of, and concerned for, the feelings of others and deal with others in a kind and sympathetic manner.
- Students will demonstrate an ability and commitment to work collaboratively with others.

Civic

- Students will exhibit personal integrity and ethical decision-making.
- Students will demonstrate social responsibility for the school environment by recognizing the impact of their decisions on others and themselves.

- Students will participate in meaningful activities within the school community.

Students will demonstrate an awareness of their global responsibility to others and the environment.

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Related Files
- 2019-11-24-17:47_Amity CVBL.pdf

Introduction

Introduction

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

The governing body of the Association is its Board of Trustees which supervises the work of four Commissions: the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE), the Commission on Independent Schools (CIS), the Commission on Public Schools which is comprised of the Committee on Public Secondary Schools (CPSS), the Committee on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI), and the Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools (CPEMS), and the Commission on International Education (CIE).

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

Teaching and Learning Standards

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of and for Student Learning

Support of Teaching and Learning Standards

School Culture and Leadership

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning

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

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Study

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Amity Regional High School, a committee of 10 members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people. In addition to faculty members, the self-study committees included work with various PTSO and Board of Education members.

The self-study of Amity Regional High School School extended over a period of 11 school months from August 2018 to June 2019. The visiting team was pleased to note that parents, students, and board of education members joined the professional staff in providing information for the self-study deliberations.

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

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Team

A visiting team of 16 members was assigned by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Amity Regional High School. The visiting team members spent four days in Amity, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students and parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school aligns with the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. Since the members of the visiting team represented classroom teachers, guidance counselors, library/media specialists, and school administrators,diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Amity Regional High School.

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

-review of the school's self-study materials

-32hours shadowing 16 students for a half-day

-a total of 30 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 30+ teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment

of student learning

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

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

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

Standard 1 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The school community purposefully engaged in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process deliberately informed by current research-based best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning.

A committee of interdepartmental teachers came together over a four year period to research and identify the school's core values and beliefs about learning.The process for identifying and committing to the core values was dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive. The creation process for the core values began with a desire to authentically represent the school community. The Core Value Creation Committee assembled anecdotal evidence of the positive traits that members of the school embodied. From there, research was conducted and scholarly articles were assembled to further explore best practices regarding 21st century learning skills, such as grit/perseverance, problem-solving, speaking and listening, and reading. Following this initial research, the school implemented a series of PD sessions focused on increasing student-centered learning opportunities in the classroom. Research was also conducted to examine how the students from the three towns (Bethany, Orange, and Woodbridge) merged when they came to Amity High School in 9th grade. Once a general understanding of the community became clear, focus groups were assembled to continue to hone in on the true traits at the core of Amity. Throughout the process, surveys were conducted in order to understand the community's core beliefs from a variety of perspectives.

While some parents and students are unable to explicitly identify the nine words listed in the core values and beliefs about learning, individuals across the school community are able to speak to the essence of the core values. Eighty-seven percent of students, 91 percent of parents, and 88 percent of staff believe that they embody the true values of the community and almost all believe that the school community works to uphold the values. Almost all individuals interviewed referenced positively the community's response to an incident in the previous school year that involved a small group of students displaying anti-semitic behaviors. The vast majority of teachers gave examples of core values being innately included in instruction, especially through the ongoing diversification of text selections for courses. The core values are posted in almost all classrooms throughout the school and in the main areas of the school.

As a result of the school community engaging in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based practices, the school community embodies its commitment to its core values.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- students
- parents

Standard 1 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school has purposefully challenging 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies; however, each expectation is not yet defined by specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement.

Stakeholders feel the core values and learning expectations are challenging and embody the spirit of the school. Academically, students are challenged to broaden their examination of various subjects and deepen their understanding of each subject through academic coursework. Students are provided a wide variety of electives and CTE courses that they are encouraged to take advantage of throughout their years at Amity Regional High School. Students have opportunities to challenge themselves in the Senior Service Learning Program and Teen Teaching.Additionally, the school challenges students to participate in at least one club, of which there are over ninety, or athletic team, including Unified Sports. Almost all stakeholders feel that the social and civic expectations are particularly challenging, as they are intended to prepare the students for the 21st century.

While the academic, civic, and social expectations are deeply challenging, 12 percent of staff disagree and 22 percent of staff are undecided on whether or not each expectation is defined by specific and measurable criteria. Some students believe academic criteria vary from teacher to teacher. Some members of the faculty and administration recognize that the criteria for civic and social expectations are still in the beginning stages of being developed, especially because they are not as well defined.Currently, school-wide analytic rubrics are undergoing changes as the faculty reflects on the role they play in each department. In the next five years, the school will contribute to the district work that will focus on developing a portrait of the graduate, at which time they will review and revise the school-wide rubrics.

Because the school establishes challenging academic, civic, and social expectations, the school embodies the core values that it has outlined; once the school defines specific and measurable criteria for each challenging expectation set forth, all students will fully be able to achieve targeted high levels of success.

Sources of Evidence
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- students
- parents
- central office personnel
- school leadership

Standard 1 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are consistently reflected in the culture of the school and by design guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations; the school's core values informally drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in many classrooms.

The school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations are expressed in the school culture through school signage, staff shirts, website taglines, and monthly themes for advisory activities. During Spartan Seminar, lessons are given that focus on the school's core values and learning expectations. However, the activities during Spartan Seminar vary from teacher to teacher, which creates inconsistency in the delivery of the material. Additional evidence of how core values and learning expectations are embedded in school culture include the elective courses, clubs, Unified programs, and co-curricular activity offerings

Because the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations are embedded into the culture of the school, they guide the school's policies, procedures and resource allocations. The school has a yearly theme that is based on the school's core values. Additionally, the student handbook, which delineates school policies and procedures, is reviewed by associate principals and assistant principals from the middle schools. There is a plan in place to involve students in the process for this upcoming year. The principal has the autonomy to use resources to support core values as evidenced by the reaction to the anti-semitic incident during the 2018-2019 school year. The Anti Defamation League (ADL) was hired to train students and a peer mediation program was created.

Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are informally driven by the school's core values. The core values and learning expectations are not intentionally worked into curriculum, instruction, or assessments but, according to the professional staff, "embedded organically" in everything they do. Teachers do not believe they explicitly mention the core values in sample work but believe they are seen as innate in classroom experiences and expectations. The principal has a plan in place to use PLC time to address what the expectations, especially civic and social, look like in the classroom. Additionally, the teachers have a plan to actively and intentionally incorporate social and civic learning expectations into curriculum, assessment, and instruction.

Because the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are consistently reflected in the culture of the school and by design guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations, Amity Regional High School embodies its core values; once educators formally embed core values and learning expectations into curriculum, assessment, and instruction, they will deliberately encourage the pervasiveness of the core values in the culture of the school.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- students
- school leadership

Standard 1 Indicator 4

Conclusions

The school has plans to regularly review and revise its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, and district and school community priorities.

Opportunities to review and revise the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations have been based primarily on feedback from various groups. The core values will be further reviewed and revised in the coming years as the school develops the portrait of the graduate. Additionally, the portrait of the graduate identified will allow for the review and revision of the school-wide analytic rubrics regarding academic, civic, and social expectations. Once the work on the portrait of the graduate is completed, a plan will be put into place to consistently review and revise the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.

When the school develops a formal plan to conduct research, gather multiple data sources, and review district and school community priorities, the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations will fully represent the Amity community.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Commendations

Commendation

The collaborative and inclusive process in which the Amity Regional High School learning community developed and established its core values and beliefs

Commendation

The consistently challenging academic, civic, and social learning expectations

Commendation

The pervasive nature of the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations in the school culture

Commendation

The plan to regularly review and revise the core values based on research, multiple data sources, and community input within the next two years

Commendation

The commitment to improving the clarity of civic and social learning expectations

Standard 1 Recommendations

Recommendation

Define and implement specific and measurable criteria for success for academic, civic, and social learning expectations, including effective school-wide rubrics

Recommendation

Align all curriculum, instruction, and assessments, including school-wide rubrics, to the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations

Recommendation

Regularly review and revise the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as on district and school community priorities

Standard 2 Indicator 1

Conclusions

At this time, the curriculum is not yet designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

The learning expectations document in the Atlas platform is a previous version of the school's learning expectations. Currently, there are no references to the 21st century learning expectations in course curricula. However, the professional staff believes that these are referenced during lessons, student work, and on teachers' class pages. At this point, the connection to the written curriculum is not in place. While, according to the Endicott survey, 86 percent of parents indicate that the curriculum provides their children with opportunities to achieve the school's learning expectations, only 60 percent of teachers agree that the formal curriculum design ensures that all students practice and achieve the school's learning expectations.

When the curriculum is purposefully designed, the school will be able to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- student work
- teachers
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The curriculum is written, to varying degrees of fidelity, 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; and assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic or course-specific rubrics.

The most thoroughly-written curriculum documents and units of study include essential questions, concepts, content, skills, learning strategies, and assessment practices. In Atlas, there is an online template that is used for curriculum writing. The thoroughness of the different curricula varies considerably within departments, with some offering clear details and others missing numerous points of information. Most of the documents are missing assessments and rubrics.

There are examples of written curriculum and units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills. Science courses such as Biology NGSS, Chemistry I, and Alternative Integrated Science III are written in the common format, positively impacting student achievement. In English, the Creative Writing course demonstrates expectations of the curriculum writing process. Concert Band, Concert Choir, and Concert Orchestra are written following the district template, as well. The template has changed recently to reflect Understanding by Design. Teachers are aware of the inconsistency in completion and the change in the template.

According to the Endicott survey, 73 percent of parents report being informed about the school-wide learning expectations. The school is moving in the direction of measuring students' performance on the school-wide civic and social expectations and is in the process of including results of the expectations rubric in PowerSchool. At this time, the written curriculum in Atlas does not align with the 21st century learning expectations.

Some units in Atlas do not include instructional strategies. Others included multiple strategies, encouraging teachers to choose those that best meet their students' learning styles. Some instructional strategies include WordPools, PowerPoints to provide modeling, and labs. Varied instructional strategies such as role-playing in World History, discussion in across various levels of English classes, student-interviewing in Chinese, and read and respond in Geography were noticed.

Teachers include rubrics in lesson plans and in pieces of student work, but less so in curricular documents. English classes use a Common Core expository writing rubric and a speaking and listening rubric for independent reading. An introductory biology class uses a rubric. Recent revisions of school-wide learning expectations have delayed employing school-wide means of measuring 21st century learning expectations and the creation and implementation of corresponding rubrics. At this time; however,school-wide rubrics are not in place.

When the curriculum is written, across all content areas and courses, 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; and assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic or course-specific rubrics, Amity Regional High School will ensure a rigorous learning experience for its students.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview

- teachers
- parents
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The curriculum inconsistently emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem-solving, higher order thinking, cross-disciplinary learning, authentic opportunities both in and out of school, and informed and ethical use of technology.

While, according to the Endicott survey, at least 80 percent of teachers believe that their department or content area emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge, there are not written curricular entries across the board in the Atlas platform. There is a lack of consistency and completion in the written curriculum across departments. While these concepts are being taken into account in lesson planning and instruction, the extent that this occurs across all areas is inconsistent and uneven.

Eighty-three percent of students indicate that the content of their courses challenges them to think critically and solve problems. The science department is taking initial steps to write curriculum aligned with the NGSS Standards which can lead to phenomenon-based learning. The lessons that teachers plan address thinking critically and are planned around problem-solving activities; however, such representation in Atlas is inconsistent. Students from three different Biology and English classes find that classes are rigorous, but inquiry is more likely to occur in higher-level classes, and parents believe the same.

According to the Endicott survey, 83 percent of parents, 83 percent of teachers, and 83 percent of students indicate that the curriculum reflects higher order thinking skills. In the World History collaborative map in Atlas, a document provides question stems for higher order thinking. It gives examples for different level questions and provides stems from Bloom's Taxonomy. There are also document-based questions in the unit that support higher-level thinking. Not all units in Atlas illustrate this; however, higher order thinking skills are part of the taught curriculum.

The Endicott survey indicates that the 56% of faculty believe that cross-disciplinary learning is limited. Only 71% of students feel that they can use the information learned in one class in another class. Teachers indicate that there may be parts of certain courses that become cross-disciplinary, but it is generally informal rather than planned opportunities. These included a law and journalism collaboration as well as one in English and social studies. A physics and technology course was planned but did not run. In a US history class, the teacher uses history content to teach how to choose a good research question, and this is reflected on the school's library/media center webpage.

There are numerous authentic opportunities for students. These include in-school academic experiences that connect students to real-world issues such as One Book/One Amity; Spartan Academy, which ensure that students are real-world ready for military service or work; and morning announcements using the television station. Out-of-school opportunities include senior service learning, Transition Academy, Science Research Program, Teen Teaching, and myriad clubs. Teachers and counselors value authentic opportunities and help students make real-world connections through their academic discipline, e.g., Spanish practices; perspectives included in IPAs, "Skills you learn in Algebra I will have real-world applications," "Career of the Week;" and the inclusion of academic courses that inherently make that connection, including automotive, culinary, journalism, and the TV studio. Upperclassmen are more familiar with the opportunities available than the lowerclassmen.

According to the Endicott survey, more than 80 percent of students, staff, and parents believe that students are learning about the ethical use of technology. The library/media specialists visit classrooms to teach how to use technology in an informed way, especially when looking at research. This includes teaching students to make citations, paraphrase, and how to use Noodletools. The library/media specialists supported approximately 80 percent of social studies classes and all English classes in the 2018- 2019 school year. Additional information about teaching ethical and informed technology can be located in the subject guides on the library/media center's website.

When the curriculum is written explicitly to emphasize depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem-solving, higher order thinking, cross-disciplinary learning, authentic opportunities

both in and out of school, and informed and ethical use of technology, students will have consistent, guaranteed opportunities to meet the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- students
- parents
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 4

Conclusions

There is inconsistent alignment between the written and taught curriculum.

While according to the Endicott survey, 72 percent of teachers feel that the written and taught curriculum are aligned, the instances of this are limited and isolated. Although the written curriculum can be accessed in the Atlas platform, teachers who teach the same courses address different content. Teaching that is occurring in the classrooms is more in-depth, comprehensive, and rigorous than reflected in the written curriculum. Teachers use intra-department meetings to address alignment. The science department is currently creating a document that aligns NGSS with its present curriculum.

Department heads conduct walk-throughs on a regular basis. If the data from the walk-throughs indicate that there is variation in the expectations in the curriculum, they communicate about it. Additionally, the department heads monitor performance on common assessments to determine if there are any discrepancies.

When there is clear alignment between the written curriculum and taught curriculum, teachers will be provided with student performance data that informs instruction and appropriate student interventions, which will promote student achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist minimally between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.

Curricular coordination, intra-departmentally as well as inter-departmentally, takes place mainly during PLC time. PLCs are generally able to meet three times during two cycles; however, due to scheduling issues causing teachers teaching the same course to be not available to meet or teachers' inability to meet with their special education co-teachers,there is a negative impact on the effective use of this time for curricular work. As a result, teachers discuss curriculum informally within departments, meeting after-school, or communicating online.

Vertical articulation of the curriculum has been centered on department chairs' meetings with the director of curriculum. Content leaders from the sending schools also attend, and sometimes grade 6 teachers are included. The director of curriculum's attempts to meet with curriculum directors at the Pre-K to 6 schools have been disrupted by scheduling issues and the lack of consistency of the PD days. The elementary schools belong to three different districts and are not a part of the Amity Regional District No. 5. Grade 9 teachers find gaps in grammar, science, and math in students' abilities, depending on the sending school, as well as content variations. Participation of all teachers in all departments in grades 7-12 vertical articulation meetings is absent. A formal curriculum revision process has also not occurred for several years. Teachers feel that some vertical articulation takes place occasionally on an informal, impromptu basis, even if not a school-scheduled PD time.

When 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, students' transitional needs from grade to grade and from the sending schools to the high school will be ensured, allowing students to meet 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 6

Conclusions

Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are quite sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.

Staffing levels support district guidelines. The majority of the professional staff (63 percent) indicates that the school has sufficient professional staff to implement the curriculum including the cocurricular program and other learning opportunities. There are also interventionists on staff, who support the science, math, and writing help centers.

Teachers are satisfied with the availability of instructional materials, equipment, and supplies. Department chairs find that purchases are readily approved, although they try to manage expenditures by purchasing an older edition of a textbook or by putting off a large purchase for a year. The social studies department has created a multiple-year plan to address the needs of the department. According to the Endicott survey, 89 percent of parents report that their children have been provided with the materials needed for each class, e.g., textbooks, computers, equipment, and supplies. The music department has a generous budget for performances, sheet music, and equipment such as instruments. PE teachers believe that their fitness facility could be competitive with many professional gyms.

A technology plan is in place to acquire new technology, with a projected purchase of 1:1 Winbooks for grades 9 and 10 in the 2020-2021 school year. There are Smartboards or an equivalent in all of the classrooms. There are Computers on Wheels (COWs) available in the English, science, world languages, and math departments.

The school's facilities such as the TV studio, black box, and fitness center support and complement the curriculum. The TV studio hosts morning announcements and is used in Broadcast Journalism and Film Literacy. Science teachers find the school's science labs to be exceptional.

The library/media center offers students access to research materials, quiet study areas, and collaborative study areas. Library/media specialists assist in research procedures and the use of technology. Parents are pleased with the ability of their children to access the various databases from home and students are learning to use databases, such as Journal Storage (JSTOR), making connections to future work in college.

Because staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient, the school is able to provide effective curricular resources, including co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.

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

Standard 2 Indicator 7

Conclusions

The district consistently provides the professional staff with sufficient personnel and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development of the curriculum using assessment results and current research; however, the district is inconsistent when providing the staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for the evaluation and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research.

The school schedule allows for professional collaboration during the school day. Teachers meet either in intra- or inter-departmental meetings four times during two cycles. During that time, teams can work to make adjustments to the curriculum. The exception to this time is some special educators who have other responsibilities to their co-teachers during that common planning time. Department chairs have been able to make some decisions regarding the use of meeting times, so the time allotted to the curriculum has varied across departments. Additionally, there are department meetings held after school and minimum days which may or may not be used to support curriculum development. While, according to the Endicott survey, 72 percent of teachers believe that they are directly involved with the formal curriculum evaluation, only 47 percent believe that there is sufficient time to accomplish this work.

There has not been a curriculum revision cycle for many years. The last time the math and English departments worked on reviewing and revising the curriculum was in 2012-2013, when they addressed the changes in the Common Core. Nevertheless, when a new course is developed, teachers feel supported in its creation with an appropriate number of curriculum hours.

The curriculum director, building administrators, and teachers use data from walk-throughs, STAR data, AP results, baselines, and common assessments to make adjustments to the curriculum. Several teachers have attended professional development to bring back current research for curriculum writing. The science department worked with Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES) and brought back information about the NGSS as it relates to curriculum writing. Fourteen teachers from various subject areas have beenPADI-trained (performance-based assessment design) over the summer, working to create more authentic assessments. These teachers share their assessments with the entire faculty and act as resources for other teachers wanting to learn more about PADI.

Because the district consistently provides the professional staff with sufficient personnel and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development of the curriculum using assessment results and current research, the school is able to use data to drive curricular decisions. When the district prioritizes time for curriculum development, evaluation, and revisions, Amity Regional High School will be able to ensure that it has an up-to-date curriculum that meets the 21st century learning needs of its students.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Commendations

Commendation

The inclusion of the learning expectations on class pages and in lessons

Commendation

The common curricular writing template

Commendation

The variety of authentic opportunities available to students

Commendation

The emerging science curriculum work that is aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards

Commendation

The building-level walk-throughs focused on ensuring alignment to 21st century learning expectations

Commendation

The intervention positions in English, science, and math

Commendation

The support for development of new courses

Standard 2 Recommendations

Recommendation

Purposefully align the curriculum and ensure the integration of 21st century learning expectations

Recommendation

Write all curriculum using the common format

Recommendation

Make connections throughout the written curriculum to inquiry and problem-solving, higher order thinking, cross-disciplinary learning, authentic opportunities both in and out of school, and informed and ethical use of technology

Recommendation

Ensure formal opportunities for cross-disciplinary courses

Recommendation

Ensure alignment between the written and taught curriculum

Recommendation

Increase vertical articulation between the middle schools and Amity Regional High School

Recommendation

Implement a plan for ongoing and adequate curriculum revision

Recommendation

Increase common planning time for co-teachers

Standard 3 Indicator 1

Conclusions

Teachers' instructional practices are regularly examined, in some areas, to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.

The core values are revisited and recognized through weekly email updates from the principal as well as a weekly spirit day. Teachers devote some time to ensure consistency with 21st century learning during PLC time and during department meetings. Students in the Science Research Program read articles, write about their research process, and communicate with peers regarding their process, which are some key 21st century learning expectations. Students in a Spanish course present their research to classmates, ask thorough questions, and write observations. While teaching expectations are directed by the department heads, administrators, and national and state standards, some departments are not yet regularly addressing all 21st century learning expectations.

When all teachers regularly examine and align instruction with 21st century learning expectations, students will benefit from this consistency and more effectively be able to identify the 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 2

Conclusions

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

Personalized instruction is promoted by an extensive choice of courses; multiple opportunities for students to create their own curriculum, e.g., Science Research Program, Senior Service Learning Program, senior interest project, co-enrollment with colleges, and Educational Center for the Arts; and over 90 co-curricular clubs. According to the Endicott survey, 80 percent of teachers feel that they personalize instruction, often offering a range of choices for project topics, strategically assigning specific tasks during group work, or giving students choice in how to present projects.

There are some examples of student engagement in cross-disciplinary learning such as with the bee-keeping, which engages students in both science and economics; the humanity/inhumanity project, engaging students in English and History; and the "One Book One Amity" project, which engages the entire school in reading the same book and discussing it across multiple subject areas. Additionally, cross-disciplinary learning occurs in the manufacturing classes, which build equipment for the PE backyard games unit and support the theatre classes with their stage and set needs. There are some circumstances that lead to collaboration between the Spanish and art classes for a project, the school's STEAM day involves many departments engaged in projects including the school newspaper *The Trident*, which are showcased to elementary school visitors.

In addition to personalizing instruction, students are engaged as active and self-directed learners. Students are able to pursue and develop their passions by taking part in or creating a school club. If the school does not offer a desired course, students may choose an independent study. According to the Endicott survey, 65.5 percent of students report that their teachers give opportunities to choose topics for some assignments. Within classes, students are given autonomy to pursue research and projects of interest. Specifically, first-year students in the Science Research Project browse a variety of articles for a topic of interest to pursue for further research. Learning was personalized in french and Spanish courses through projects such as students completing short speaking recordings on an open-ended topic as well as working on photo album presentations in which they described what life used to be like.

Many teachers give lessons that include an emphasis on inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking. Some examples are student-generated questions, analyzing films, synthesis from analyzed work, and hands-on projects in all disciplines. Eighty-four percent of teachers state that inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking support student learning, and 74.5 percent of parents agree. In addition, students engage in a question-answer relationship (QAR), by generating questions for visiting politicians.

Some assignments require students to apply knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, such as opportunities to teach at community schools or interact and share language learning via Skype with students in other parts of the world. In addition, there are opportunities to study at field stations and work with university and industry researchers. Students can experience real-world connections in participating in certain programs in the school, such as the career and technical education (CTE) program, which is used to build and maintain school resources, and students in transition programs and alternative programs are engaged in projects with real-world connections.

Students are both formally and informally asked to self-assess, sometimes during regular lessons and sometimes at intervals throughout the year. In one literature class, students are asked to journal their progress while working on a research project. Several classes, including the Spartan Seminar and world history, include reflection and surveys as part of assignments. According to the Endicott survey, 68.4 percent of students feel that their

teachers provide them with opportunities to assess their own work.

In many classrooms, technology is integrated into the lesson, such as the use of computer carts and labs for research and writing assignments. Several classrooms have online textbooks and extensively use Google Docs, projectors, and Smartboards. Eighty-one percent of the students report that they need to use technology in their assignments. There are challenges, however, with the reliability of technology and connectivity, which affects lesson instruction. Nevertheless, teachers use software to improve writing, citation, and ethical use of resources.

Because most teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by often personalizing instruction; engaging students as active and self-directed learners; emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking; applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks; engaging students in self-assessment and reflection; and integrating technology, Amity High School students are well-prepared to meet 21st century learning expectations.When all teachers' instructional practices engage students in cross-disciplinary learning then they will better support student achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 3

Conclusions

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

According to the Endicott survey, 87 percent of teachers adjust their instructional practice based on some formative assessments to gauge student learning. When a teacher noticed students struggling to complete an assignment using a political cartoon in a social studies class, she adjusted her instruction in order for students to move forward with greater understanding. Teachers in the world languages department oftentimes use exit slips and dipsticks, along with informal questions to formatively assess students and adjust instruction.

Eighty-eight percent of students agree that their teachers use groupings during instruction, and these groupings are sometimes intentional. One CTE teacher sets up strategic groups based on student ability. Another teacher allows students to select their own groups. STAR data is occasionally used by teachers to select student groupings

There are some modified and inclusion classes that allow for intentional differentiated instruction. While the varied offerings of leveled classes help students to be appropriately placed in a class that meets their needs, students sometimes find that instruction is not differentiated enough within a course. In some classes, students are supported through occasional visits or permanent placements of student tutors, student teachers, and full-time tutors. In a social studies class, a teacher distributes different parts of an assignment to students based on their ability. Even though the high school has no formal data team, teachers use data from the math and reading STAR assessments for strategically differentiating texts and tasks for students; however, parents are concerned that students with 504s or IEPs may not always receive the differentiation necessary within their classrooms.

Teachers frequently use alternate classroom strategies such as teaching organizational and study skills and allowing student access to teacher websites with supporting information and remedial practice online. In a science class, students use varying strategies, based on ability, to take part in the dissection of an owl pellet. Seventy-eight percent of parents feel that teachers provide additional support when needed.

Because teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by regularly using formative assessment, especially during instructional time; often purposefullyorganizing group learning activities; and frequently providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom, they are able to meet the needs of most students. When the teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by consistently strategically differentiating, then they will ensure that all students are successful.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- school board
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Teachers, both individually and collaboratively, commonly 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; and engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.

In many departments, data from formal assessments such as STAR, AP, or SAT exams are used to plan and tailor instruction to the students of a class. Some assignments, such as research projects, have built-in formative assessments during the project. Also, in a history class, exit slips are used as a formative assessment to drive the next day's class.

According to the Endicott survey, 67.6 percent of teachers report having formal opportunities to examine student work to improve their instructional practices. Teachers are proud of their efforts in PLCs to examine student work; for instance, a Spanish teacher shared poor student work after a lesson that had gone awry with his PLC, which led to helpful suggestions for the upcoming class.

In addition to student work, in many departments, PLCs review student surveys in order to improve classroom instruction. According to the Endicott survey, only 44.4 percent of students believe that their teachers ask for student input on how to improve instruction. Teachers believe that this is due to student confusion over what is considered feedback. Parent input is limited, as only 23.7 percent find that teachers ask them for feedback about their instructional practices; nevertheless, when parents have a complaint about instruction, they are able to contact teachers and receive a timely response.

Teachers' graduate coursework is a source of examining current research. They are afforded extensive professional development opportunities as participants and presenters and consult with industry professionals. Faculty requests for outside professional development and professional association memberships are always approved. For instance, a counselor was able to find and attend current, relevant professional development not provided at the school.

Teachers and administrators find that PLCs and instructional rounds are opportunities to engage in professional discourse focused on instructional practice. Teachers believe that PLCs are the best time to review instructional practices from department to department. However, there are not enough opportunities for vertical teaming with the middle schools.

Because the teachers, both individually and collaboratively, use student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments; examine student work; use feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents; examine current research; and engage in professional discourse focused on instructional practice, they are able to consistently improve their instructional practices.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- teacher interview
- teachers
- community members
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners,maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices.

District and building leaders consistently support and provide resources to teachers to expand their learning. Department heads are sometimes able to plan professional development, which is personalized to teachers' needs and, often, when organized by the administrators, teachers have the opportunity to choose from a variety of PD. Teachers maintain their expertise by volunteering to pilot new programs and technology when the opportunity arises, and student teachers are seen as bringing and sharing technology and latest practices. The library/media center maintains up to date subscriptions, which are shared with department heads, e.g., JSTOR. Ninety-six percent of teachers have advanced degrees. Also, some faculty take on additional professional opportunities within their fields, such as professional performances or adjunct professorships in nearby universities. According to the Endicott survey, 82.3 percent of students agree that their teachers are knowledgeable in their fields.

Because teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices, students are provided with enriching learning opportunities.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Commendations

Commendation

The Amity culture that embodies the school's core values and beliefs

Commendation

The extensive opportunities available through clubs and classes for personalized learning and authentic application

Commendation

The consistent engagement of students in self-assessment and reflection

Commendation

The use of technology in classrooms

Commendation

The consistent implementation of formative assessments

Commendation

The variety of professional development

Commendation

The deliberate, professional discourse in PLCs

Commendation

The content-area expertise of the teaching staff

Standard 3 Recommendations

Recommendation

Examine and align instructional practices to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, across all areas of the school

Recommendation

Ensure that technology hardware and infrastructure reliably support classroom instruction

Recommendation

Increase opportunities for students to consistently practice cross-disciplinary projects

Recommendation

Intentionally differentiate in every class in order to meet the needs of all students

Recommendation

Increase content-specific, in-school professional development

Standard 4 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The professional staff employs an emerging formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st centurylearning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics.

Teachers score and report the content-related academic 21st century learning expectations minimally once per semester and the civic and social expectations once per quarter, using the generated learning expectations criteria. These scores from each course are averaged and are included in the report card. PLC groups created the content-specific learning expectations criteria for each content area. They discuss students' results during their shared time in intra- and inter-departmental PLCs throughout the school year. The administrators expect that teachers share the 21st century learning expectations with students through the postings on Powerschool unified classroom. When conducting group work and other collaborative activities, some teachers use rubrics to score these skills. During a science class, the teacher assesses student group presentations using a rubric referenced as the Amity Academic Rubric as the students share their conclusions on a forensic evidence exploration. Some student work, such as a marine science lab, is assessed using a writing strand from the CCSS criteria that is not directly connected to 21st century learning expectations. According to the Endicott survey, 65 percent of teachers apply the school-wide criteria to formal assessments. While there is growing use of the criteria to assess student progress, there remains a need for growth in the use of the criteria by all teachers. The current content specific measurements used to gauge student progression on the 21st century learning expectations lack clear criteria to measure students' attainment of the learning expectations. Students are unaware of rubrics that are assessing the 21st century learning expectations explicitly. Beginning with the Class of 2023, reported student scores are included as a graduation requirement.

When all professional staff creates and continuously employs a formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st centurylearning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics, then positive and effective instructional and curriculum changes can occur.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 2

Conclusions

While the school's professional staff communicates across the school individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st centurylearning expectations to students and their families, the school is working systematically to communicate student progress in achieving the school's 21st centurylearning expectations to the school community.

Academic 21st century learning expectations are assessed once per semester, while the civic and social expectations are assessed once per quarter, using the generated learning expectations criteria. Academic, civic, and social learning expectations are specifically listed and evaluated as being "met" or "progressing" on school-wide report cards. The school's 21st century learning expectations are clearly posted in classrooms. In addition, Amity Regional High School includes information about the new standards and their inclusion in student report cards on the school's website and on teachers' classroom pages. Administrators presented the school's 21st century learning expectations, rubrics, and grading system to the school's parent-teacher-student organization, as well as the board of education. Training to review the expectations and grading standards is offered during the school year to both the parents and freshman students to highlight the standards as a graduation requirement. The school does not have a full year of data on student progress toward meeting the 21st century learning expectations, and this information has not been shared in a whole-school manner. The board of education will review the cohort data on the 21st century learning expectations at the end of the 2019-2020 school year.

Because Amity High School's professional staff communicates across the school individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations, students and their families have a good idea of their student's progress.When school is able to communicate the school'sprogress in achieving the school's 21st centurylearning expectations to the school community, then all stakeholders will have a greater investment in the school and its expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- community members
- school leadership
- school website

Standard 4 Indicator 3

Conclusions

While in some areas the professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to academic student achievement, there is no formalized protocol for teachers to analyze data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.

The school uses multiple different standardized tests, such as STAR, PSAT, SAT, and ACT, as well as AP, NGSS, and AAPPL exams at various frequencies and with differing importance to make changes to curriculum and instruction. The STAR assessment, which is administered three times per year, helps inform teacher and administrator practice. The STAR assessment focuses on reading and math student skills and tracks student growth over time. STAR data is informally used throughout freshman and sophomore year to monitor students' success but is not used to address inequities in student achievement. Teacher-created CFAs are used to varying degrees to monitor student progress and to create a baseline for instruction. For example, teachers in the math department use a benchmark CFA to determine students' prior knowledge when entering freshman algebra courses. The results of the assessment are shared to guide the instructional focus. Based on the results of the algebra CFA, students may be moved to a different level of the same course. On a district level, the director of curriculum, other administrators, and the staff development committee meet four times per year to discuss standardized test scores, including SBAC, STAR, NGSS, SAT, and district common formative assessments. There is no formal or consistent protocols used by the department heads, teachers, and the counseling department to inform instruction and curricular changes. Standardized testing is not being used to drive the curriculum and inform instruction to address inequities in student achievement.

When the entire Amity Regional High School professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data, they will be better able to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey

Standard 4 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Prior to each unit of study, teachers somewhat communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific goals to be assessed.

Unit-specific goals and standards that are related to the academic expectations are posted by most teachers in their classrooms and shared before introducing assignments. The 21st century learning expectations are posted on each teacher's website in the Powerschool Unified Classroom. Teachers are able to find the unit-specific goals documented in the district's online curriculum mapping software, Atlas. These are shared with students; however, the 21st century learning expectations are not on the Atlas platform. Students often know the learning expectations of a unit but less often know how the 21st century learning expectations are connected to the assessments of the class. According to the Endicott survey, only 53 percent of teachers agree that learning expectations are shared before a unit of study, while 34 percent are undecided. Nevertheless, this practice is growing after a year-long pilot of the 21st century learning expectations, allowing teachers to begin connecting the 21st century learning expectations with the content-specific standards and common departmental rubrics that were already in place. As teachers have become more familiar with the 21st century learning expectations in relation to the content-specific and unit-specific goals, their use and communication of the expectations has increased.

When teachers consistently communicate to students the school's applicable 21st centurylearning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed prior to each unit of study, student achievement of the 21st century learning expectations will increase.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Prior to summative assessments, some teachers provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success, such as corresponding rubrics, which inconsistently define targeted high levels of achievement.

According to the Endicott survey, 74.5 percent of students 67.3 percent of parents agree that students are familiar with the criteria, such as rubrics, that teachers use to assess assignments and other classwork. There is an increase in student understanding of the criteria for success on summative assessments and rubrics as they progress from grades 9 to 12; as students progress through the school, they become more familiar with the expectations. Some teachers consistently use rubrics for assessments to determine the extent to which students understand the content and can perform associated skills. Teachers of Advanced Placement courses directly align instruction and assignments to rubrics in order to assess students' ability to comprehend and make an argument. In the AP Latin course, for example, the teacher closely follows the guidelines set forth by the College Board to evaluate students' ability to use the evidence from the ancient Latin text. There are no set guidelines connected to teacher grade books, and most rubrics are teacher-generated rather than shared, minimizing the specific and measurable criteria that can be used to assess students on their achievement.

While a specific rubric may not be used on a traditional, content-focused assessment such as a unit test, some teachers provide a varying degree of specific and measurable criteria on other forms of summative assessment. The types of criteria and rubrics vary greatly because many are self-generated by teachers or departments. For example, in a drawing and memory painting project, students identify and explain assessment criteria such as composition, watercolor techniques, and work ethic, in addition to examples and steps to follow while completing the assignment; however, the four scores a student can achieve, exemplary, proficient, developing, or deficient, do not have detailed criteria for students to understand. Conversely, an English 1 assignment includes explicit criteria for students to self-assess their development of effective paragraphs and an overall effective written response which will then be assessed using a comprehensive rubric tied to Common Core State reading and writing standards. In some classes, a writing rubric is reviewed early in the year and then referenced as assignments are connected throughout the course. Many teachers share rubrics prior to major assignments but not for all large assessments, and they do not always provide students with information on how to improve to progress to high levels of achievement.

When all teachers purposefully provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success prior to summative assessments, such as corresponding rubrics, students will be able to meet targeted high levels of achievement.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 6

Conclusions

Teachers pervasively employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.

According to the Endicott survey, 92.4 percent of teachers, report that they use a variety and range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments. Curriculum mapping software, Atlas, is able to display the frequency of formative and summative assessments used in courses and identifies over 4,500 assessment methods which include over 1,900 formative and over 2,200 summative assessments. During a physical education lesson on soccer, students are included in the model to instruct the class on the position of the soccer players and are assessed informally on the information; the game play that follows is an additional example of formative assessments prior to the larger unit quiz in the coming weeks. During a psychology class, the teacher ends the lesson by assigning and collecting exit slips to check student understanding of the content covered in class. Formative assessments are vital to the lesson in an acting class, during which the teacher and students reference the rules of improvisation to guide the feedback that was provided to students. Students are routinely asked to participate in Kahoots, Quizlets, and KWL charts that provide information on strengths and weaknesses for the students. In a 10th grade English class, there is a progression of formative assessments during the writing process which leads to the larger and complete summative assessment of the final written response. Students also have some choice and voice in assessments, as represented in the beekeeping presentation from the Spartan Academy in which students have many choices to showcase their learning.

Because teachers purposefully and consistently employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments in each unit of study, students can achieve academic success.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- student shadowing
- student work
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey

Standard 4 Indicator 7

Conclusions

Teachers across the school consistently collaborate in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments.

Teachers have formal opportunities to collaborate during the school day in their designated inter- and intra-department PLCs. PLC time is focused on the development of, calibration among, and reflection on the assessments that they share within their departments. According to the Endicott survey, more than 77 percent of teachers agree that they meet to discuss and improve formative and summative assessments. In addition to PLC time, teachers meet in biweekly department meetings during designated professional development days and have the opportunity to work during the summer to develop curriculum and assessments. Analysis and revision of assessments are not limited to common assessments, as science and world language teachers share individual assessments on similar skills to monitor student growth and areas of need. An outcome of this process is the science department deciding to focus on developing student oral presentation skills. Students in the Science Research Program use a peer review rubric to identify an area of focus to improve on when speaking in public. Students use the rubric during the year to monitor their goals and provided consistent feedback and support. Through this reflective process, teachers make changes to common assessments such as how the science department added a practical lab application to the exams.

Because teachers purposefully and consistently collaborate in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments, students progress toward achieving learning goals.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey

Standard 4 Indicator 8

Conclusions

Occasionally teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.

In English classes, students follow the writing process to receive comments on their initial drafts as they work toward the final draft of a written response. On more traditional formal assessments, such as the physics motion test, students are provided with corrective feedback in addition to notating whether the answer is correct. English, science, and social studies teachers set aside time in class to conference with students about progress on the drafts for essays or projects, and the English department uses Google Docs and Turnitin to grade and provide corrective feedback. According to the Endicott survey, 67 percent of students agree that teachers provide corrective feedback to help them improve an assignment; similarly, 55 percent of students and 58 percent of parents agree that feedback and corrections are provided in a reasonable amount of time. Teachers provide rubrics, but students are not always sure how to improve on the assignment. For example, when students complete tests, the score is reported with wrong and correct answers notated but without feedback that can help them improve their score. In a science class, a student was allowed to take the test home and make corrections for an improved grade; however, this practice is not consistent. Only 45 percent of teachers report that they regularly provide students with opportunities to review work based on feedback provided prior to the final grade. Parents are frustrated with differences among teachers between when and what is reported in the grade book, as the variance can leave parents and students with limited knowledge on a student's progress in a course. At this time, there is not a board of education policy that addresses the consistency of grading and providing this information to students and parents; nevertheless, the district empowers building administrators to oversee the proper sharing of feedback.

When all teachers routinely provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work, students will know how they can improve, and achievement on assessments will increase.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- student work
- students
- parents
- school board
- Endicott survey

Standard 4 Indicator 9

Conclusions

All teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.

According to the Endicott survey, 100 percent of teachers report that they use the results of formative assessments to adapt their instructional strategies within a lesson. On a world history class assignment, students are asked to analyze primary sources, allowing the teacher to provide corrective feedback on the Reading and 9-10 Informational Writing Common Core Aligned Rubric and to evaluate the needs of the students. In Spanish, students are asked to create quick, 60-second videos about themselves in Spanish to practice and show their current ability levels connected to material they are learning in class. On the welcome back reflection for the orchestra class, students are asked to self-reflect, and this provides qualitative data on their expectations and areas of need, and the teacher is able to design instruction around these self-identified needs. As a standardized, formative assessment, STAR provides teachers with student data on reading and math skills that are discussed during intra- and inter-departmental PLC time and department meetings, as well as with central office administrators to adapt instruction and improve student learning. The math department uses the scores to find the potential areas of need to address the fundamental skills that may be lacking. This practice has led to opportunities for reteaching material if needed to individual students or to the whole class, which improves student performance. Students feel academically prepared for major assessments due to the activities and formative assessments prior to summative assessments. Additionally, should there be a need for more support, teachers are readily available after school, or students can visit one of the full-time tutors or peer tutors who are available for additional support during the school day.

Because teachers deliberately and purposefully use formative assessment to inform and adapt instruction, student learning is directly improved.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- student work
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 10

Conclusions

On an inconsistent basis, 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 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, and survey data from current students and alumni.

Multiple types of evidence are examined regularly, including individual student work, common course and grade-level assessments, content-specific and school-wide rubrics, standardized assessments, data from other schools, and survey data collected from students. According to the Endicott survey, 64.1 percent of teachers agree that a range of evidence of student learning is used to drive curricular and instructional decisions. Teachers use their intra- and inter-departmental PLC time to collaborate and examine curriculum and reflect on improving their practice. While teachers meet on a consistent basis, there is no standardized process in place for the entire school to follow when evaluating student work, curriculum, and instruction revision.

Since this is the first year that the school is formally measuring the school's 21st century learning expectations, there is no formal data to examine. The report card has an evaluation system that measures student mastery of or progress toward 21st century skills on a semester basis. Skills are averaged together based on teacher assignments and instruction. Mastery of these skills is included as a requirement for graduation for the Class of 2023. Teachers are including these expectations within their lessons and assessment on a varying basis.

Common course and common grade-level assessments are implemented in the vast majority of the school. Some departments, such as science with NGSS and social studies with the C3 Frameworks, have changed and modified Atlas curriculum course guides based on the new standards. Components of the curriculum are shared across courses, but they are inconsistently found in Atlas.

The school shares STAR, NGSS, PRE-ACT, PRE-SAT, SAT, and ACT data with the board of education. Data is used by administrators to advocate for their students. The school counseling department observed an increase in the number of students taking the ACT, which drove the school administrators to ask the central office to offer the Pre-ACT on SAT day in October for all sophomores. The STAR assessment helps inform teacher and administrator practice. Given across the district in grades 5-10, the STAR assessment focuses on reading and math skills. STAR is administered three times per year, provides normed assessment, and tracks student growth over time. The results are consistently used by the department heads, teachers, and the school counseling department to inform instruction and curricular changes.

The school climate survey is given to students twice per year, and the results are used to assess strengths and deficiencies. Based on the results of the school climate survey, there is a strong need to focus on the social-emotional development of the students. To help determine needs and beliefs, research was also conducted on how the students from the three towns, Bethany, Orange, and Woodbridge, merged when they enrolled at Amity High School in grade 9. Additionally, students are introduced to stress management skills and group sessions during Spartan Seminar.

Both the administration and the school counseling department use Naviance data to make changes in programming and shape counseling services offered to students. Student college acceptance information, financial aid needs, and post-secondary transfer rates are also tracked through Naviance. Data is collected and used to track alumni experiences and shape activities.Alumni serve on informational panels and return to the school often to share their experiences with students and staff.

When teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, consistently examine a range of evidence of student learning, 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; and

survey data from current students and alumni, purposeful curriculum revision and new instructional practices can be designed and implemented.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- student work
- students
- school board
- Endicott survey

Standard 4 Indicator 11

Conclusions

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

PowerSchool grade book changes have been adapted to allow for the scoring of the 21st century learning expectations connected to the core values and beliefs about learning. Teachers report out on student progress on the social and civic expectations once per marking period, and student progress toward achieving the academic learning expectations is assessed once per semester at least. These requirements were established after reviewing the practice and determined acceptable by the administration. The board of education and central office administration recognize that the process of reporting out on the 21st century learning expectations has just begun, and the data will be reviewed after a year of collection. Teachers spent time during PLCs to align the 21st century learning expectations and core values to existing departmental rubrics to use with students and attach to traditionally scored assignments. While progress has been made to incorporate these new practices into the grade book, only 39.3 percent of teachers agree, according to the Endicott survey, that school-wide grading and reporting practices are being regularly reviewed and revised. For example, science department members meet during PLC time to review and calibrate assessments, but their grade books are not completely consistent; rather, the specific content areas within science are relatively the same in how grades are calculated. While the central office administration and the board of education review standardized measures to monitor student success, such as STAR, SBAC, NGSS, PSAT, and SAT, they also recognize the variance within teacher grade books. Parents are frustrated regarding what is reported out by teachers in relation to timeliness and the understanding of how the score on the 21st century learning expectations was achieved. The adaptation of the 21st century learning expectations to already established assessment measurements in departments helps with a seamless transition of the skills into the classroom, but it also has the effect of forcing the expectations within rigid rubrics. For example, the use of AP scoring rubrics in world language courses to support the 21st century learning expectations broadly encompasses the expectations. Teachers share and discuss the 21st century learning expectations prior to assessment, but are not consistently able to explain the connection between the 21st century learning expectations, core values, and their academic progress. There is much variance in how grades are calculated in courses, and, while rubrics are used, students are sometimes unclear on how any feedback allows them to improve the assignment or how it relates to the 21st century learning expectations.

When grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning, teachers will be able to accurately report and measure student needs and growth on the 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- students
- school board
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey

Standard 4 Commendations

Commendation

The formal process of scoring and reporting individualized progress on the 21st century learning expectations to students and families

Commendation

The communication through PowerSchool and Unified Classroom pages

Commendation

The use of PLC time to share information about the development and results of common assessments

Commendation

The practice of providing students with unit-specific goals prior to new units and assessments

Commendation

The use of rubrics to provide specific and measurable criteria for success

Commendation

The range of assessment strategies employed, including formative and summative assessments

Commendation

The deliberate and purposeful use of formative assessment by teachers to inform and adapt instruction

Commendation

The use of standardized test scores from feeder schools to assist in programming

Commendation

The inclusion of 21st-century learning expectations in PowerSchool reporting

Standard 4 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop a formal process through which all professional staff measure student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations

Recommendation

Implement specific and measurable criteria, such as school-wide rubrics, to assess the 21st century learning expectations

Recommendation

Report the school-wide progress on the 21st century learning expectations with the Amity Regional High School community

Recommendation

Create a formalized process for teachers to analyze data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement

Recommendation

Align 21st century learning expectations with unit-specific goals and share them with all students prior to new units and assessments

Recommendation

Consistently communicate the specific and measurable criteria for success prior to summative assessments

Recommendation

Embed the 21st century learning expectations throughout all summative assessments

Recommendation

Provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback across all classes and subject areas, to ensure students revise and improve their work

Recommendation

Examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice

Recommendation

Consistently review grading and reporting practices in order to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning

Standard 5 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The Amity Regional High School community, to a significant extent, consciously and continuously works to build a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.

The school provides a well-organized student handbook that clearly states the expectations of the students. According to the Endicott survey, 87.5 percent of students report being familiar with the school's academic and social and civic expectations rubrics. According to the most recent school climate survey, at least 89 percent of students believe there are clear rules against bullying and hurting others. The school's Spartan Seminar facilitates positive relationships between students and staff. Students are supported in creating clubs that foster their curiosity and learning. ARHS boasts over 90 clubs, including a Suicide Prevention organization and a Unified Sports initiative to end the use of the "R" word. Students also have the opportunity to participate in the principal's council, a weekly meeting to communicate ideas directly with the principal. Parents find clear and effective communication between the school and their families which helps to build positive working relationships.

Because the school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning, it consistently results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all stakeholders.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school is consistently equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for many students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

The school has effective inclusion of students with disabilities through intentional practices such as a Unified PE class and other assorted electives that foster a school-wide heterogeneous community. Students in the Unified Physical Education class demonstrate positive relationships between typical students and students with special needs. All students have the opportunity to take a wide variety of electives representative of 21st century skills, such as a number of CTE classes, including engineering, computer-aided design, culinary classes, and screen printing, as well as electives such as theater and photography.

There are many Advanced Placement course offerings, allowing students to challenge themselves across many disciplines, including AP Computer science, AP Psychology, and AP U.S. History. In addition, courses are leveled to meet the needs of all learners, e.g., Honors, L1, L2, and L3. However, teachers and students find that there are inconsistencies with how students are selected for each level, and there is concern surrounding the rigor involved in lower-level classes. While rigor is evident for some students and class levels, it is not quite as present in other places. Additionally, there are inconsistencies about having access to a co-teacher in level 2 and 3 classes.

Because the school is consistently equitable and inclusive, makes certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, the school successfully fosters heterogeneity. When Amity Regional High School ensures access to challenging academic experience for all students, then it will ensure high levels of achievement for students on the 21st centurylearning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- community members

Standard 5 Indicator 3

Conclusions

There are multiple formal, ongoing programs and processes through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st centurylearning expectations.

Spartan Seminar is a program that meets bi-monthly for 33-minute sessions. Each Spartan Seminar group comprises approximately 24 students and focuses on lessons geared toward their social and civic academic expectation rubrics. This is a valuable program, but delivery by teachers and participation by students is inconsistent. Nevertheless, the entire school community reports positively on the effectiveness ofLink Crew, a program in which rising juniors and seniors apply and receive training on how to help incoming grade 9 students transition to high school.

There are many other opportunities for students to create a relationship with a staff member at ARHS. There is a robust athletic program with an estimated participation rate of 60 percent of students. There are approximately 170 students in the music programs, including the band and choir. Spartan Academy is a smaller alternative school within the high school to connect to at-risk students. Additionally, the school provides students with over 90 clubs and after-school programs, with a high level of student participation.

Because of the formal, ongoing programs and processes, each student has an opportunity to have 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 centurylearning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- community members
- department leaders
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 4

Conclusions

In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff extensively engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning; often use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices; and consistently dedicates formal time to implement professional development. In some areas, the school community applies the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

PLCs are well received by the faculty, as the built-in collaborative time is effective professional development time. Inter-departmental PLCs, which meet once every eight school days, comprise 10-12 interdisciplinary team members. Intra-departmental PLCs are department-specific and include smaller groupings of teachers who meet once every four days, and teachers value this time immensely. The principal's newsletter comes out each Friday and includes useful information for teachers, students, and parents. There is also a principal's council two times each month to which any student is invited to meet with the school principal. There are regular committee meetings in various capacities including student government, Spartan Academy, Link Crew, and a steering committee for new courses. These are all effective outlets for discourse which can provide opportunities for reflection.

Teachers and school support staff are very frequently encouraged to attend professional development opportunities outside of the building. Approximately $13,000 are spent annually on supporting 38 members fo the professional staff going to out-of-district PD. This includes, but is not limited to, an ADA compliance workshop, a CMEA conference, Connecticut Of Language Teachers (COLT), Dismantling Racism, and social-emotional learning conferences. School counselors are encouraged to attend college visits to broaden their knowledge base, so they are able to help students make more informed college-related decisions.The principal is involved in several professional committees and organizations, such as the National Merit Scholar Advisory Council.

Professional development occurs frequently throughout the year; however, teachers desire more content-specific growth opportunities in order to improve instructional strategies and better help students develop 21st century skills. Teachers also desire professional development relevant to teaching strategies associated with the impending 1:1 technology rollout. Nevertheless, there has been an effort made to use feedback from the teacher evaluation and goal process to inform PD for this upcoming year with a focus on educational practices such as assigning "authentic assignments."

In some areas, the school community applies the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The science department had an outside consultant from ACES to help their redesign efforts of the curriculum. This task involved a great deal of work over a period of two years. The world languages department received PD on integrated performance assessments. Inter-PLC instructional rounds have led to collaboration and improved instructional strategies. An English teacher uses a single-point rubric, integrated from a speaker who addressed the faculty in a school-wide professional development session. The math department chair uses a non-evaluative process where refine, design, and create is the model for teacher growth. Through a collaborative process, teachers are encouraged to learn and implement new instructional strategies. Teachers may propose new courses to a steering committee, based on students' needs and interests. The process is streamlined and leads to increased student engagement in a variety of courses.

Because the principal and professional staff extensively engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning; often use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices; and consistently dedicates formal time to implement professional development, the staff ensures that student learning consistently improves. When the principal and professional staff consistently apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained through professional development, the school will ensure the continuous improvement of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 5 Indicator 5

Conclusions

School leaders consistently use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning.

Teachers find that observations result in growth mindset conversations and reflections. This is a change was catalyzed by the professional development and evaluation committee's hiring of an outside consultant during the 2017-2018 school year to reframe observations. Intra- and inter-departmental PLCs offer opportunities for non-evaluative instructional rounds amongst colleagues. This practice drives purposeful conversations around instructional strategies to improve student learning outcomes. Department heads observe teachers in a non-evaluative, growth-based capacity. The faculty engages in the practice of "complementary observers" by which two teachers, who have been trained, observe a class in a non-evaluative, growth-based capacity and offer positive feedback to colleagues. The principal observes, evaluates, and offers growth-based feedback to non-tenured faculty members. Tenured faculty members are formally evaluated on a rotating basis by one of the associate principals, and, while this is evaluative, conversations are positive and focused on teacher growth to improve student learning. The multi-layered, non-evaluative, opportunities for evaluation have led to meaningful professional learning goals for teachers.

Because school leaders consistently use research-based evaluation and supervision processes, there has been an improvement in student learning.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 6

Conclusions

The organization of time frequently supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.

The faculty has two regularly scheduled professional learning groups. Staff is grouped in two PLC committees; both intra- and inter-departmental groupings offer formal opportunities for collaboration. Small intra-departmental PLCs meet once in a four-day cycle. Larger interdisciplinary PLCs meet once in an eight-day cycle.

Teachers also collaborate on their own time if needed. There are three content-specific interventionists, in science, math, and literacy, to whom students and teachers have access in order to meet the needs of students. Classes are organized on a six-drop-two basis creating six daily class periods of 57 minutes. This offers students the opportunity to register for eight classes, including core academics and electives. Students have access to study hall periods, and grades 9 and 10 students have literacy and STEM study halls in their schedules.

Because the organization of time supports research-based instruction and professional collaboration among teachers, there has been a positive impact on the learning needs of all students.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 7

Conclusions

Student load and class size often enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students.

The administrators strive to keep class size to a reasonable level. While no content area averages more than 21 students per class, science labs and gym classes approach or meet the district maximum of 28 students per academic class. According to the current Agreement between the Amity Education Association and the Amity Regional Board of Education, class sizes can be up to 28 students and teachers' student loads will not exceed 125, with the exception of physical education.Most teachers exceed 100 students. In some cases, there are classes that exceed the averages, there are inconsistencies among student distribution across similar class levels. Nevertheless, according to the Endicott survey, 79.3 percent of students and 74 percent of parents agree that class sizes are reasonable.

Because the majority of class sizes and teacher caseloads are manageable, teachers are able to meet the learning needs of individual students.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 8

Conclusions

The principal, working with other building leaders, pervasively provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.

The core values of fairness, respect, and passion are reflected throughout the school community, and a great effort is made to include as many voices as possible in decision-making. The building administrators lives the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations through initiatives such as "no office days," consistently meeting with other building leaders, the principal's council, empowering staff to take on leadership roles, faculty meetings, and a weekly newsletter. Fairness is demonstrated by deliberately allowing equal time for all voices. There are respect and compassion between building leadership, students, and staff. The teachers have a deep appreciation and respect for the passion that the principal has for the success and welfare of all staff and students.

Because the principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, the school as a whole embodies Spartan pride.

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

Standard 5 Indicator 9

Conclusions

Teachers, students, and parents are frequently invited to be involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.

There are long-standing partnerships between the school, students, and parents. All stakeholders had representation on the hiring committees for the principal and superintendent.Students and teachers serve on committees to implement school-wide initiatives such as Spartan Seminar. A steering committee comprising students, teachers, parents, and building administrators is responsible for deciding on new class offerings. A staff council for which staff members meet with building administrators is held once each week to discuss building-wide initiatives and to voice any concerns. There is an active student government that regularly meets with the principal which promotes shared responsibility. The principal attends the meetings of the school's active PTSO. There is a school climate committee that meets each quarter which includes two parent representatives.
The College Fair brings together the community to make decisions regarding college applications. The school offers over 90 clubs that are active in the school community, many of which promote responsibility and ownership. Parents are involved in athletic booster clubs through which they partner with the school community. Teachers are encouraged to take leadership roles in the school community through faculty advisorships, the Spartan Seminar, and chaperoning comprehensive school trips.

Because teachers, students, and parents are regularly involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making, the school promotes shared responsibility and ownership.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 10

Conclusions

Teachers consistently exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning.

There are frequent opportunities for teachers to immerse themselves in ways to improve the school. Teachers are able to take part in the staff council, the steering committee, Spartan Seminar, department chair roles, complementary observer roles, and advisorships to clubs.Because the school climate is conducive to individual initiative and administrative support for teacher initiative, focus on school improvement is always being considered.Many teachers volunteer their time to collaborate both before and after school, and they are willing to work with students for great lengths beyond school hours.

Because teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning, Amity Regional High School's learning environment embodies its core values and beliefs about learning.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 11

Conclusions

The school board, superintendent, and principal are consistently collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st centurylearning expectations.

The principal and newly hired superintendent have worked intentionally to create an effective relationship with regular communication with the school board. All three parties act as concerned stakeholders on behalf of the students of Amity Regional High School. Specifically, through comprehensive dialogue, myriad initiatives and services have been implemented or maintained, including a school-wide Mental Health Survey, which led to the hiring of a social worker, and increased training for the school's mental health professionals to deal with an increased reporting of student stress. Additionally, the principal and superintendent worked collaboratively to put on a Community Forum last year at which school leadership and community leaders of youth programs partnered to discuss how students can be supported in and out of the school setting, and the success of this community forum will lead to future similar events. The superintendent and board of education demonstrated their responsiveness to community wishes by installing a Sally Port to increase school safety. The principal and superintendent have a relationship that is based on trust and shared responsibility for student safety and academic success. There are frequent meetings with the board of education and building leaders to ensure that needs are met.

Because the school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive, the school culture is conducive to the achievement of the school's 21st centurylearning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 12

Conclusions

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

The principal has the decision-making authority to initiate programs that bring the core values to life, resulting in positive school culture. Examples can be seen in initiatives such as the implementation of non-evaluative, multi-tiered teacher evaluation, the reorganization of the special education facilities, Spartan Stories, One Book One Amity, and school-wide themes such as "Find your Passion."The principal reviews policy and the budget process with the opportunity for input. The board of education recently asked the principal to develop a school-specific graduation requirement to meet new state mandates regarding student capstone projects culminating in their senior year. Autonomy is provided to the principal; for instance, the principal was able to act decisively to develop a plan to bring the community together after an unfortunate act of student anti-semitic vandalism.The principal also works with grade 9 transitions programs, academic interventionist positions, mentoring specific students at-risk of failing to graduate, and interacting with students on a daily basis.

Because the school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school, many new initiatives have been implemented, having a positive impact on the school culture and student learning.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teachers
- school board
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Commendations

Commendation

The trust in the school leadership to effect positive change

Commendation

The support for a wide variety of student-led clubs

Commendation

The Unified Theater Program

Commendation

The continued support for the Visual and Performing Arts and the wide variety of career and technical education programs

Commendation

The Spartan Seminar and Link Crew program

Commendation

The support for out-of-school professional development opportunities

Commendation

The use of multiple forms for providing evaluative and non-evaluative feedback, including instructional rounds and complementary observers.

Commendation

The principal's commitment to maintaining "no-office" days

Commendation

The support for teacher initiative in taking on leadership roles

Commendation

The genuine sense of collaboration and shared responsibility between the principal and superintendent

Standard 5 Recommendations

Recommendation

Examine and implement best practices regarding leveling practices

Recommendation

Provide rigorous and challenging learning opportunities for all students at all levels

Recommendation

Increase staff buy-in and consistency across Spartan Seminar

Recommendation

Provide content-specific professional development opportunities

Recommendation

Evaluate and increase the efficacy of the use of PowerSchool in creating the master schedule

Recommendation

Ensure equitable and consistent class sizes

Standard 6 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The school has an extensive range of effective timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including at-risk students and identified students, that supports each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Students have daily personalized interactions with teachers, counselors, administrators, and other support staff who are able to monitor students' academic, social, and emotional well-being. Counselors monitor grades for each marking period and work with middle school counselors to get information about rising freshman students who are at-risk with low grades or poor attendance. A student study team consisting of a psychologist, counselor, administrator, classroom teachers, with input from parents and students when appropriate, meets weekly to monitor standardized testing results and classroom performance to identify students in need of extra support. The SST recommends appropriate interventions to be provided by classroom teachers or the school's math, science, or literacy interventionist. The SST also coordinates with services within the school, e.g., health, social work, student assistance counselor, etc., and with outside agencies such as Intensive Outpatient Programs, dentists, and physicians for additional interventions.

Support services staff, such as school psychologists and the student assistance counselor, also counsel students either individually or in small groups. Students are able to either seek out these resources themselves or be referred by administrators, counselors, or teachers. Groups discuss student concerns and challenges and facilitate student social, emotional and academic growth.

Speech and language therapists provide services to students identified through IEPs, in both individual as well as small group settings. In addition to assessing, diagnosing, and treating speech, language, social communication, and cognitive-communication disorders in students, they also participate in initial PPT meetings for students suspected of having a speech or language disability to determine if further evaluation is needed. They also consult with regular education teachers, special education teachers, and paraprofessionals to recommend interventions for use in the instructional environment.

Link Crew is an upperclassman student team that provides social, emotional support to ease the transition for incoming freshmen. Link leaders coordinate and provide a half-day program for the incoming students before school begins. Also for incoming freshmen, Amity Regional High School hosts a grade 8 parent and student orientation to help freshmen acclimate to the school.

Students in need of more intensive support through special education services are assigned case managers who coordinate all aspects of their educational program with teachers, families, counselors, related service providers, and administrators. School counselors serve as case managers for students identified with 504 Plans.

Spartan Academy is a specialized high school program featuring a smaller classroom setting to meet the academic and social-emotional needs of students who are having difficulty in the traditional classroom. Eligible students are recommended by the planning and placement team (PPT), Section 504 of the American Disabilities Act team, or the student study team (SST) and are approved through a formal review process. Depending on individual needs, students may spend all or part of the day in the Spartan Academy. Student progress is monitored by teachers, psychologists, and counselors with the goal of transitioning back to the general school setting. Students, parents, counselors, and psychologists meet to discuss students' progress. There is direct communication between the middle and high schools to identify freshmen who may need the environment provided at the Spartan Academy.

Because Amity High School has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including at-risk students and identified students, it is able to support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 6 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school consistently provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about student support services.

According to the Endicott survey, 68 of students, 72 percent of staff, and 82 percent of parents agree that the school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about the available student support services.The school website is a primary source of information for students and families, as it provides documentation such as the program of studies and student handbook as well as newsletters and links to school social media pages. The school counseling department communicates personally and electronically with students and parents, offering information about programs and resources, such as Advanced Placement courses, early graduation options, the Yale-New Haven International Studies program, and financial aid resources. The website includes a link to Naviance, the school's online platform for college and career readiness tools that allow students to set and keep track of their personal and academic goals. The school's website also has the library/media center website which offers information about available library/media center resources.Parents and students are able to access grades, homework assignments, attendance data, and discipline reports through Unified Classroom and PowerSchool. Parents sign up for a service called Swift K-12 alert solutions when students enroll in school. This service provides both email and text alerts to parents about emergencies, meetings, events, and resources.

The principal writes a weekly newsletter to the community called "Friday Happenings" that provides timely information about services, resources, and upcoming events. The counseling department offers several informational nights throughout the year for parents, such as a junior planning night, senior night, the college fair, financial aid night, the program of studies fair, grade 8 transition night, back to school nights, and parent conferences. The counseling department started a Parent University program that provides information about timely issues such as school safety, bullying, substance abuse, and risky behavior. There is a "Speak Up" mechanism on the website for students who harbor concerns which allows them to report their information anonymously. Counselors share resources and information with families, including information about Umatter, a suicide prevention club; Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD); and the school resource officer. The counseling department also refers parents to local community organizations for assistance.

Because Amity Regional High School consistently provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student services, students are able to meet 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teachers
- parents
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 6 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Support services staff use technology across the school to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.

Support service staff use email to communicate in a timely manner with one another and with parents whenever the need arises. Support services personnel use attendance, behavior, and academic information updated regularly through PowerSchool to make and evaluate action plans for individual students. Faculty members are able to review IEPs and 504 Plans through IEP Direct in order to better inform individualized Instruction. The school counseling department uses a variety of technology to prepare students for graduation by helping them set academic goals, prepare and register for important pre-college tests and exams, and complete college applications. Counselors also use Naviance for college planning for students and to conduct career lessons at each grade level. Naviance allows students to establish goals and develop appropriate post-secondary plans based on a variety of data, including standardized test scores, GPA information, and surveys administered during the career fair. Naviance serves as a platform to help facilitate senior graduation planning and the high school exit process, including submission of transcripts and recommendation letters to colleges. Students are provided CollegeBoard accounts, allowing them to access their SAT scores as well as a report of what areas need improvement. Students are advised on how they can link their accounts with Khan Academy to access preparation activities for future testing. The counseling department uses PowerSchool and Unified Classroom to check and store grades and monitor graduation requirements.

The special education team leader and pupil services department coordinate the use of Chromebooks, iPads, Google Apps, frequency modulation systems, and Proloquo2G talk-to-text applications for special education students and English language students, which are determined on an individual basis to assist students with communication. Assistive technology is provided to students for written expression and organizational and executive functioning skills. In most cases, technology supports for EL students include the use of Google Translate to translate documents. The school nurses use both PowerSchool and SNAP, which allows FERPA and HIPPA compliant information to be shared with appropriate individuals throughout the school. Medical information that parents put in the InfoSnap portal is available in PowerSchool.

Because support services staff use technology across the school, they are able to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- student shadowing
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 4

Conclusions

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

Amity Regional High School's ten counselors, who serve 1,497 students, have a caseload of 190 students each. Several counselors maintain an area of expertise in order to better serve student needs. These counselors include a career and vocational counselor and a student assistance counselor. In addition, the school is staffed with three full-time school psychologists who counsel students as needed. A full-time social worker was added to the faculty for the 2019-2020 school year andis the only social worker on the faculty. However, the National Association of School Social Workers recommends a ratio of 1 social worker for every 250 students and further recommends that social workers who provide intensive services to students should have a ratio of 1 social worker to 50 students.

Counseling services have established program objectives, which include academic objectives, career objectives, and personal, civic, and social objectives that incorporate the core beliefs and values. However, the curriculum is need of revision and inclusion on the Atlas platform. Additionally, services can vary from counselor to counselor. Links to school-sponsored special programs, senior parent night, financial aid for college, AP registration information, and Amity Regional High School's college admissions profile are available on the website. The school counseling department also establishes weekly communication with the school community through its director, who publishes weekly updates and notes from the counseling department on the principal's Friday Happenings Newsletter.

Counselors spend the majority of their time in individual counseling sessions for academic, personal, and social issues. The curriculum existing curriculum, which is not included on Atlas at this time, outlines specific times that counselors meet with each student, either individually or in a group setting. All students with a grade below 65 meet individually with their counselors at least quarterly to develop and implement a goal plan. Counselors review PSAT and Pre-ACT test performance with students and parents to determine appropriate accommodations for SATs and ACTs. Counselors also meet with groups of students for counseling sessions that strengthen student investment in post-graduate planning. The student assistance counselor meets with individual students and small groups of students to address out of school issues and needs that may arise in the school community. Counseling also runs several groups depending on the needs of the students. The group topics include, among others, grief and gender identity issues.School psychologists conduct weekly cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) sessions for a designated population of students. During the current school year, four counselors will be trained in cognitive behavioral intervention for trauma in schools, provided through a state grant.

When a student's issues are beyond the scope of a counselor's expertise, counselors refer students and families to outside resources such as private therapists, the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), and Connecticut Psychiatric and Wellness Center, LLC. Additionally, the director of counseling meets with community resources regularly to discuss services with which to collaborate. Counseling also relies on feedback from career fairs and the Senior Service Learning Program (SSLP). The director of counseling is also part of a collaboration of mental health professionals.

School counselors look at a variety of data to assess and improve services as needed. Data includes yearly student surveys such as a school climate survey, at-risk behaviors survey, the biennial Alliance for Prevention and Wellness survey for grades 7, 9, and 11, senior exit survey, alumni survey, and alumni data from Naviance. Other data counselors examine include the AP 5-Year Score Summary and the yearly AP Student Score Summary. All the information from surveys and collaborative efforts drive counseling department programming.

While students believe that many students do not meet with their counselor on a regular basis, they find that counselors are always available to meet with them if they request a meeting. According to the Endicott survey, 60 percent of teachers and 59.4 percent of parents agree that students meet regularly with their counselors, and 77.2 percent of teachers and 70.1 percent of parents believe that the school has an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff.

Because Amity High School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed counseling personnel who are available to meet regularly with students and provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling; engage in individual and group meetings with all students; deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community area mental health/social services; and use ongoing and relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community; most students are able to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. When the school also develops a clearly articulated, written developmental program and uploads it to Atlas, all students will have better access to achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- students
- department leaders
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 6 Indicator 5

Conclusions

The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who use an appropriate referral process; conduct ongoing student health assessments; and consistently use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school 21st century learning expectations; however, they currently do not provide preventative health services or direct intervention services.

According to the Endicott survey, 57 percent of parents believe that health services are adequate. The school employs two full-time nurses, one of whom serves a dual role as the school nurse coordinator, and a full-time nursing assistant.This comports with the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) recommendation that minimum ratios of nurses-to-students depending on the needs of the student populations be 1:750 for students in the general population.

Students are referred to the health office by staff or parents or they may self-refer. The Amity Regional High School health office does not currently provide students with preventative health care. Instead, students are referred to their own medical providers or area clinics for preventative care. The referral process includes calling parents and logging the information into SNAP. The nursing staff follows up with parents to ensure that they are acting on their referrals. Direct intervention is limited to partnering with health teachers to deliver information and materials during health classes.

The nursing assistant is charged with responsibilities related to student health records and may provide other services as requested by the nursing staff. Ongoing health assessments of students include nurses ensuring compliance with required immunizations and physicals of all students. Parents are notified with student health concerns, such as immunization requirements.

In order to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century skill learning expectations, nurses attend professional development, including two full-day and four two-hour staff development sessions, and meet with a medical adviser two-to-four times per year. The health office receives feedback from medical advisers, school administrators, and parents. Health services also track the social-emotional health of the student body. Each year, grades 7, 9, and 11 students complete a survey administered by the director of the Alliance for Prevention & Wellness. This comprehensive instrument includes questions about a variety of adolescent health concerns and risky behaviors. The results from the survey provide the community with important information about students and allow staff to improve curriculum and programming to ensure that students achieve 21st century learning expectations.

Because Amity Regional High School has an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support services who use an appropriate referral process; conduct ongoing student health assessments; and use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, they are able to improve services and ensure that each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. When the school's health services also provide preventative health services and direct intervention services, it will ensure that all students have a safe and healthy opportunity to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- student shadowing
- facility tour
- teachers

- students
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 6 Indicator 6

Conclusions

Library/media services are adequately 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; and conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

The library/media center's mission statement and curriculum are aligned with Amity Regional High School's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, as well as other relevant standards. For instance, library/media specialists partner with classroom teachers to provide instruction, regarding the informed and ethical use of technology, particularly when conductingresearch. During the 2018-2019 school year, the library/media center supported all English classes and nearly all social studies classes. According to the library/media specialists' self-designed Library Program Assessment survey, 58 percent of teachers have asked the library/media specialists to teach a session of their classes. Seventy-three percent of teachers are aware that the library/media specialists post instructional and how-to guides online for teachers and students, and 98 percent of teachers who requested materials from the library/media center found that the materials purchased were useful to their students. However, only 34% of student and 59% of staff report using the library services freuently during their classes

Students access resources in the library/media center, in the classroom, and outside of school. From November 2017 through October 2018, the library/media center's more than 35 curated databases were accessed over 60,000 times, the library/media center's web page 30,000 times, and 4,000 print items were checked out. According to the Endicott survey, 78 percent of students, 88 percent of teachers, and 81 percent of parents feel that the library/media center provides students with a wide range of print and non-print materials, as well as technologies and services to support their learning. The library/media center offers students access to 32 desktop computers, a range of Microsoft Office applications, an additional two computer labs with a combined 28 computers, and a server-based printer system that handles copying, scanning and emailing. The library/media center uses technology, such as Google Forms, Windows user logs, LibGuides, and Google Education applications. All of this technology allows students and faculty to access electronic resources made available by the library/media center, the State of Connecticut through its research IT CT, and other local area libraries.

The library/media specialists are responsive to students' interests and needs, support independent learning, and conduct ongoing formal and informal assessment to continually improve resources, instruction, and services to help each student achieve the learning expectations. The library/media specialists select and update resources, including print and non-print holdings, databases, and digital tools, and they maintain the library/media center's web page and "LibGuides," where they post instructional sessions and research and technology guides. The library/media specialists collaborate on instructional sessions with teachers, provide reading and research resources, help facilitate technology training for teachers, and support student testing. They also facilitate information literacy instruction, the freshman academic integrity initiative, and the library/media center's grant-funded guest speaker program. The library/media specialists help students select materials for personal and academic needs, navigate the research process, and use technology, including printing resources.

The library/media center is served by two certified library/media specialists and one administrative assistant. The library/media center is fully staffed throughout the school day, as well as for 35 minutes prior to the beginning of the school day and 45 minutes after school ends. According to the Endicott survey, 71 percent of students find that the library/media center is available to them before, during, and after school.

The library/media specialists select materials to broaden students' awareness of the perspectives of diverse communities. The library/media specialists address all students' learning needs by choosing resources at a range of reading levels. Enlarged print, audiobooks, and spoken text are available from databases, e.g., American Bibliographical Center and CLIO Press (ABC-CLIO), Social Issues Research Series (SIRS), researchIT CT, Lion

Libraries, and Bookshare. Resource lists of books at accessible levels are maintained specifically for reading classes. Based on the Library Program Assessment, which is also administered to selected students, 41 percent of students have worked on research with a library/media specialist, 92 percent found that help useful, and 100 percent of those who have asked library/media specialists for help using technology indicated that they are able to answer their questions.

Library/media specialists routinely purchase materials requested by individual students. Forty-eight percent of students surveyed in the Library Program Assessment have asked library/media specialists for specific materials to meet personal interests or academic needs, and 100 percent of them indicated that the library/media specialists are able to get them what they need.

The library/media specialists assess the library/media center program in several ways. In 2018-2019 they extended the Library Program Assessment survey to 59 students who frequent the library/media center. They also administer assessments or exit tickets in some instructional sessions to ensure students meet learning expectations. The library/media specialists use feedback from staff and students, together with their own ongoing self-assessment, to improve facilities, resources, programs, and services. Improvements include changes and additions to instructional sessions, visiting presenters, library/media center layout and furniture, student sign-in and computer use procedures, library/media center web page design, research and "How-to" guides, phone charging stations and electronic equipment, and the fiction, non-fiction, college, textbook, and graphic novel collections.

Because library/media services are adequately 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; and conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, the library/media center is able to consistently improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- student shadowing
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 7

Conclusions

Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who extensively collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the schools' 21st century learning expectations; provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students; perform ongoing assessments using relevant data, including feedback from the school community to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Support services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel, including a director of pupil services, a coordinator of pupil services, seven special education resource teachers, transition specialists, two speech and language specialists, an audiologist, and three reading teachers. Amity Regional High School employs two special education paraprofessionals in thestudent SAILS program, an 18-21 program, which stands for Spartan Academic and Independent Living Skills. Other support specialists are available to be contracted upon request.

Teachers, counselors, and all support service personnel collaborate in various formats in order to meet students' needs and to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. Intra- and inter-departmental PLC time is used to collaborate among departments to modify, scaffold, and create lessons for students of different educational needs; this includes time for teachers and co-teachers to collaborate on ways to best meet the needs of special education students and to monitor student progress. Due to schedule constraints, not all co-teaching teams have common planning time, potentially impacting their ability to collaborate and plan meaningful instruction and assessment. Paraprofessionals assigned to resource rooms feel that they need more time to collaborate with special education case managers in order to better understand their assigned students' learning needs and to determine effective strategies for helping students meet with success. Collaboration on the transition from middle school to high school for students with IEPs and 504 Plans has been identified as an area in need of improvement. Teachers and counselors believe that they would benefit from additional support in meeting the needs of EL students in the classroom. EL students are provided with instructional resources in their reading classes, and modifications are made to their assignments in their other academic classes; however, they do not receive instruction from an EL certified teacher. Providing inclusive support services for all students is embedded in the school's core values and beliefs. Support services staff provide additional inclusive opportunities for students by specially designed instruction in co-taught core classes and classes with para-assistance as required by students IEPs. Students in the transition program participate in electives and programs, such as Unified Sports, Unified Theater, Spartan Seminar, Unified Sign Language, Vocational Training in the cafeteria, community trips, offsite vocational training within the community at local businesses, and adaptive physical education classes with typical peers. The SAILS program works in partnership with Albertus Magnus College to provide special education students with vocational training until the age of 21.

Each special education student's annual review includes teacher reports, informal assessment data gathered by special education teachers and paraprofessionals, STAR testing data, and summative assessment data, which are all used to determine accommodations for standardized testing, such as PSATs and PreACTs, and inform ongoing individual programming and interventions. In accordance with federal guidelines, each student receiving special education and related services is evaluated triennially or as determined by the special education team. The planning and placement team creates a multi-disciplinary evaluation which may include cognitive, adaptive, social-emotional, academic, communication, and transitional assessments, depending on what is needed for each student. In each learning area, common assessment scoring and analysis are used to examine student work and determine modifications needed to ensure 21st century learning expectations.

Because 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 extensively 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 assessments using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, they are able to consistently improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff

Standard 6 Commendations

Commendation

The range of interventions provided to meet the needs of students

Commendation

The comprehensive communication that Amity Regional High School provides to families

Commendation

The variety of technology used to deliver an effective range of services to students

Commendation

The addition of a full-time social worker in response to student needs

Commendation

The continuum of services to meet Amity Regional High School students' personal, academic, career, and college counseling needs

Commendation

The opportunities provided by the student assistance counselor for students to address social, emotional, and substance abuse concerns

Commendation

The dedication to meeting student needs and interests when the library/media specialists select and acquire library/media center materials

Commendation

The implementation of inclusive support services for all students that are embedded in the school's core values and beliefs

Standard 6 Recommendations

Recommendation

Ensure that social work support services are adequate to meet students' mental health needs

Recommendation

Write a developmental guidance program to span all grade levels, and ensure that it is added to the Atlas platform

Recommendation

Ensure consistent access to guidance counselors for all students at all grade levels

Recommendation

Provide preventative health services for students

Recommendation

Increase student and staff involvement in library/media services

Recommendation

Incorporate more time for support staff collaboration

Standard 7 Indicator 1

Conclusions

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

Budget increases have been kept as low as possible by finding cost savings, while continuing to provide for a wide range of programs and services. The program of studies details the school's extensive departmental course offerings as well as many special programs. Recent additions include numerous Advanced Placement courses, Unified Physical Education courses, and the Senior Service Learning program. Counseling services provide grades 9-12 developmental guidance programming.

The school has also added full-time math, science, and literacy interventionists who provide Tier 2 SRBI support to students through their study halls. In 2018-2019, the school added a transition academy for students ages 18-21 which works closely with Albertus Magnus College. In the 2019-2020 school year, an additional full-time special education teacher was added at the high school. Substitutes for paraprofessionals are not provided, so when a paraprofessional is absent, staffing may need to be adjusted as building substitutes cannot be used to cover these positions.

Requests for summer curriculum writing hours have been generally approved after an extensive application process by the teachers and department leaders. The curriculum revisions are then reviewed after the work is completed. One technology support specialist's primary assignment is to serve the high school but this is not sufficient enough to support the building. The Wi-Fi infrastructure is inadequate, and the signal is often dropped or computers cannot access the Wi-Fi. The current infrastructure does not support the school's bring your own device program. There is also only one wireless access point for the entire district to get Wi-Fi, which leads to increased risk of failure of the entire network across the entire district. If one piece of equipment fails, the entire district will go down. Along with being in charge of the district technology needs, technology staff members housed at the high school are also contracted to provide technology support twelve hours per week for the Town of Woodbridge's fire, police, town hall, and recreation departments. This support often exceeds the twelve-hour weekly contracted time. The terms of the contract to support town services will be up for renegotiation in 2020, and discussions have started.

The school has sufficient equipment, instructional materials, and supplies. The past three years' budgets show increases in equipment purchased. Science, interscholastic sports, the library/media center, and the transition program have all received significant equipment funding in the past three years. Science and history received major textbook funding in the last two years; however, this resulted in other departments' receiving fewer instructional supplies. The career and technical education (CTE) department receives a substantial amount of its funds for equipment through the Perkins grants.

Because of the funding of some areas, there is a large range of school programs, services, and sufficient staff and support staff to support 21st century learning. When the district funds better technology infrastructure, it will be able to enhance 21st century learning.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- facility tour

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

Standard 7 Indicator 2

Conclusions

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

On a daily basis, the custodial staff provides an exceptionally high level of cleanliness for the buildings and campus. However, there is a lack of storage, and this is becominga safety hazardas some gym equipment obstructs means of egress from the building. While there have also been issues with sewage drainage in the building, the problem has been investigated and a plan is being developed to address this issue.

The school maintains, catalogs, and replaces equipment. The district uses the SchoolDude program to record and assign priority to areas of custodial or facility needs. Twice yearly, an administrative assistant sends out SchoolDude training and reminders about how to use the system to all staff members. Custodial and facility staff are issued tasks from SchoolDude. Issues also occur on a daily basis, requiring immediate action. Evening custodial staff communicate with the day custodial staff about any issues or repairs needed. According to the Endicott survey, 90 percent of parents agree that the school regularly replaces equipment used to maintain the building in a timely manner, and 84.8 percent of teachers agree. Fifty-one percent of teachers believe there are long-range plans for facilities, staffing levels, and capital improvements. Seventy-nine percent of students, 97.1 percent of parents, and 97.2 percent of teachers believe the school is clean. The facilities staff maintains a clean environment on a daily basis and any repairs needed are dealt with in a timely manner. Reports from Tools for School-Air Quality and Quinnipiac Valley Health District are reviewed, and recommendations are addressed. Records of some safety equipment are kept and are up to date. However, some department-specific safety items such as fire blankets, rag containers, and chains around compressed gas tanks, and equipment have not been properly maintained and were not available for NEASC team members to inspect. Department heads complete disposal of asset forms when equipment needs to be removed or become obsolete.

Because the school develops, plans, and funds programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and to keep the school clean on a daily basis, students have access to 21st century learning practices in a clean and modern facility.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- facility tour
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff

Standard 7 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The community funds some areas, and the school attempts to implement a long-range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements.

There are many great programs, including the Senior Service Learning Program, Science Research Program, and 25 Advanced Placement courses. There is adequate staffing for the courses. The district has a long-range, five-year strategic plan. The budget is voted on by the Bethany, Orange, and Woodbridge residents in a special referendum election in May of every year. All funds that address long-range plans are provided by the community. The community funds pay for public placements like Educational Center for the Arts (ECA) and special education placements in approved facilities. Amity Regional High School has a formal three-year operating forecast, which assumes that student enrollment will be in line with October's average daily membership from the previous year. Staffing levels are determined through mandates, electives, class sizes, program enhancements, and special education. In order to accurately forecast enrollment changes and staffing needs, the district created visual representations of trends pertaining to staffing changes, student enrollment, and employee turnover over the past five years. The school uses PowerSchool Unified Classroom as the formal record-keeping system to track yearly school enrollment, with breakdowns by course and department, as well as staffing allocations to provide the data necessary for appropriate planning. A 1.0 FTE paraprofessional was added for the 2019-2020 school year. Long-range concerns include various aspects of technology, facility needs, and capital improvements, including the projected funding for technology staffing as the school moves to a 1:1 model where each student has access to an educational device and the shared agreement with the town of Woodbridge for computer technicians. The amount of time the school computer technicians spend outside of the school is considerably taxing to the technology needs and concerns.

There is a referendum planned for December to access funds to improve the athletic fields and HVAC system. The school has two building substitutes that are present every day to cover for teachers. The district also uses 12 other substitutes to address additional teacher coverage needs. Storage in some areas of the school is a constant concern. Old classrooms are being used to store maintenance equipment and teaching supplies.

Because the community funds some areas, the school can support the facilities needs, staffing needs, and allows students to gain 21st century skills. When the community provides funding to improve technology infrastructure and address facility storage needs, students will have enhanced opportunities to achieve 21st century skills.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- facility tour
- teachers
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 7 Indicator 4

Conclusions

The building administrators and a vast majority of the faculty are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget.

The budget process begins mid-August when the Amity finance committee and the board of education set the preliminary budget calendar. In September, the superintendent presents the budget priorities. The principal meets with the building leadership team to distribute and explain goals and to discuss the budget priorities and timeline. Department leaders communicate this information to their department members and ask for input regarding their budgetary needs. At a building leadership team meeting, administrators and department leaders share their rationale for any significant budget requests prior to the principal's reviewing the total high school budget requests with the director of finance. The technology committee reviews the five-year capital improvement plan for technology. By early December, the building and program leaders, the finance office, and the superintendent conduct an in-depth self-evaluation of the district's total proposed budget. This process allows the group to consider potential budget cuts in light of what is in the best interest of the whole district. At this point, the superintendent and director of finance develop the budget package that they will present to the Amity finance committee and the individual towns. Based on the feedback from the Amity finance committee and the individual towns, the district level administrative team may make further changes. By mid-February, the budget is presented to the Amity board of education and any final revisions are made. Board of education public hearings are held in the member towns at the beginning of April, following which, the Amity finance committee and board of education vote on the final budget to send to the public for a referendum in early May. After the budget is approved, department leaders are responsible for the allocation and management of funds for their line items. Purchase orders are reviewed and approved by the department leaders, building principal, finance department, and superintendent. The superintendent is currently in the process of educating the public about the budgetary needs of Amity Regional High School to build more trust between the school and the community.

Because the faculty and administration are actively involved in the budget process, teachers have become resourceful with the allocated funds to support the delivery of curriculum, instruction, programs, and services.

Sources of Evidence
- teachers
- parents
- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff

Standard 7 Indicator 5

Conclusions

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

According to the Endicott survey, 80 percent of teachers indicate that the school site and plant support the delivery of high-quality school programs and services, and over 80 percent of the students agree, while almost 93 percent of parents feel that the physical plant is conducive to education. The building, completely rebuilt and updated in 1995, was most recently renovated and expanded in 2006. However, the school's ability to provide high-quality programs and services is constrained by a lack of adequate teaching space. The original building was designed in the early 1990s for a student population below 1,000, and, while the expansion in 2006 helped to ameliorate the problem of overcrowding, the current student population is approximately 1,500, having exceeded 1,600 in the past. For example, there is no available location in the building which would enable the school to hold a full school assembly, and approximately 20 teachers travel from classroom to classroom each day using carts. This necessity often forces these teachers to set up lessons after the class periods have begun and can impact instructional time. Additionally, traveling teachers may not always have the resources at hand to adapt to unforeseen teachable moments in their classes or the ability to interact with students prior to or after their classes. Special education services are also affected by the lack of space, as these teachers must frequently share rooms while working with their students and are distributed throughout the building, which inhibits their ability to potentially support their respective colleagues. There are concerns about the inconsistency of the heating and cooling in the building, particularly in the school counseling offices. The library/media center square footage is tight for the size of the student body, as the fire code limits the number of students in the library to 83 at any one time, and students are sometimes turned away at peak periods of use.

Another challenge is the availability of adequate storage space throughout the building in some cases impeding emergency egress. Currently, some departments and facilities staff need to store materials and supplies in common hallways and mechanical rooms which could prove to be a safety hazard for students, staff, and visitors. Plans are currently being considered to build two storage facilities outside of the building for athletic equipment. Administration storage areas and counseling areas are adequate for most situations, and cafeteria storage and preparation space is sufficient. However, the adjacent culinary classrooms are restricted by the lack of separate storage space and materials stored on the floor interfere with the flow throughout the respective areas within the culinary classrooms. An area has been identified outside of one CTE area to permit additional storage. A new room for school security personnel and equipment was included at the main entrance.In general, the school plant offers adequate space for athletic fields, outdoor activities, and parking. A referendum is scheduled for December 2019 that would be used to install an all-weather athletic field. Science classrooms have adequate space for lab storage and two large prep rooms to store chemicals and lab equipment. Recognized additional building needs include facility storage and storage for maintenance department operationsand organization.

Because the school and plant site support the delivery of high-quality school programs and services, students have opportunities to learn 21st century skills. When the school addresses the building's storage needs , learning space shortages, and HVAC issues, students will have access to safer ("and more appropriate opportunities to learn 21st century skills.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- facility tour
- teachers
- parents
- school support staff

Standard 7 Indicator 6

Conclusions

The school regularly 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.

Documentation related to the plant and facilities are housed in three places: the district's website's facilities page; the facilities office, which is housed within the district-office section of the building; and in NaviGate Prepared, an online software program that contains digital three-dimensional images and blueprints for all areas of the site's layout for the purpose of emergency preparedness.

In the 2018-2019 school year, the elevator was inoperable on three separate occasions, which presented issues for members of the school community in need of access. To remedy this, some students' schedules and classroom locations were altered, leading to disruptions in the educational process. The elevator has been repaired as of September 2019.

A safety issue concerning the unlocked rear entrance has been addressed, and a security guard is stationed there in the mornings on a regular basis. The school regularly exercises drills and procedures, and these are documented in NaviGate. The protocol for these drills is noted in the school's emergency operations guide, a flip chart provided to all staff members and posted in each classroom. The school also maintains and updates its all-hazards safety and security plan which documents the school's emergency prevention, protection, mitigation, and response and recovery procedures relevant to any natural or human-caused emergencies and disasters.

Because the school provides proper documentation about the maintenance and meets all federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations, students have access to infrastructure that supports 21st-century instruction.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- facility tour
- teachers
- school support staff

Standard 7 Indicator 7

Conclusions

All professional staff members deliberately 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.

Teachers and administrators engage in outreach efforts to include parents in the scholastic lives of their children through a weekly email called Friday Happenings, which details upcoming school events. Examples of highlighted events include back-to-school nights for all grades; parent support groups facilitated by student assistant counselor and invited guest speakers on timely topics concerning drug, alcohol and risky behaviors; junior planning night; sports informational nights; and a college fair. Parents are also informed by email blasts, text messages, Naviance, and financial aid nights. In addition, teachers, counselors, and administrators make contact by email or phone calls home to discuss student progress and concerns.

Teachers and administrators work collaboratively with parent and community organizations to increase meaningful outreach strategies to parents who are less connected with the school. Amity Regional High School has a very active parent-teacher-student organization (PTSO) which develops, organizes, and raises funds for various student activities, such as the yearbook. The PTSO also provides funds to teachers, student organizations, and clubs to support programs or activities not covered in the school budget. The PTSO meets regularly and encourages parents to participate in school activities and functions. and PTSO members act as mentors for students in the science research program.

Parents are regularly contacted, and they are involved in conferences involving the learning needs of their children. There are scheduled parent/teacher conferences each year. Parents can schedule an appointment outside of conferences to meet with a teacher or counselor to discuss their children's progress. Parents are invited to attend the planning and placement team meetings (PPT) and Section 504 meetings. Parents attend new student orientation meetings for students who are new to the district. Students considering attending the Spartan Academy are invited with their parents to tour the facility and to talk to its teachers. Site-based councils and other forms of school governments encourage parent involvement and input. According to the Endicott survey, 60.2 percent of parents believe that the professional staff activity engages families as partners in the education of their children, and 75.9 of teachers agree. Parents are invited to science fairs, concerts, theater productions, athletic events, the Senior Service Learning program expo, and art shows which showcase student work.

Because 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, students can reach 21st century learning expectations.

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

Standard 7 Indicator 8

Conclusions

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

According to the Endicott survey, 73.2 percent of parents believe that the school has effective partnerships with parents, community, business, and higher education. The Amity Regional High School booster club provides student-athletes and teams with many types of financial support to cover athletic items and equipment not covered in the district athletic budget. The PTSO develops, organizes, and raises funds for various student activities. Parents are very active in the school's theater productions and are involved in the Senior Service Learning Program (SSLP) for which parents volunteer to serve as mentors for participating seniors. However, there has been difficulty securing parents and business representatives to actively participate in the required career-technical education advisory board. The Science Research program allows students to build relationships with Yale University, and students have the opportunity to take courses at local community colleges. Albertus Magnus supports SAILS, the 18-21-year-old transition program. According to the Endicott survey, 78.8 percent of students agree that their parents have the opportunity to meet teachers, building administrators, and school counselors. The school provides parents with numerous opportunities to interact with teachers, administrators, and counselors via email, phone, and in-person meetings. The school counseling department supports students and parents as they navigate through the college admission process by hosting several information sessions that provide help with the application process.

Because the school develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning, all students have opportunities to achieve 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- department leaders
- school leadership

Standard 7 Commendations

Commendation

The range of programs for the students that includes authentic real-life learning experiences

Commendation

The exceptional cleanliness of the school

Commendation

The timeliness of repairs when requested

Commendation

The careful maintenance of custodial and facility equipment records

Commendation

The communication and education provided to the local community about the budgetary needs of the school

Commendation

The overall support of high-quality teaching and learning by the school facility

Commendation

The compliance with all federal and state laws and local fire, health, and safety regulations

Commendation

The active support of the parent-teacher-student organization of co-curricular activities that enhance student learning

Commendation

The school-developed partnerships with parents, community, businesses, and higher education to support student learning

Commendation

The frequent communications with parents and community that allow families to be engaged in the educational process of their students

Standard 7 Recommendations

Recommendation

Upgrade the technology infrastructure, including more internet access points for the other school buildings

Recommendation

Ensure the level of technology support personnel is adequate for the technology needs of the building

Recommendation

Ensure that maintenance is regularly scheduled for all department-specific equipment

Recommendation

Ensure the Five-Year Plan addresses technology needs

Recommendation

Address the storage concerns throughout the building

Recommendation

Ensure consistent and equitable funding across all content areas

Recommendation

Examine and rectify all issues that negatively impact instructional spaces

Recommendation

Address the HVAC system in order to rectify extreme temperature fluctuations

Recommendation

None

Recommendation

None

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

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

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

Roster of Team Members

Chair(s)

Chair: Mr. Garrett Dukette - Ashford School

Assistant Chair: Gregory Theriault - Wilton High School

Team Members

Leslie Casanova - Branford High School

Gregory Dirkson - Mark T. Sheehan High School

Mark Drexel - Fairfield Warde High School

Amy Farotti - North Branford High School

Steve Fasoli - Weston High School

Laurie Gjerpen - Berlin Public Schools

Alan Harris - Middleborough High School

Michael Iavarone - East Haven High School

Gina Juliano - Connecticut River Academy

Laina Kominos - Warren Harding High School

Laurie Moses - Brookfield High School

Nicki Paladino - Millis High School

Elizabeth Praven - Farmington High School

Marianne Uus - Stratford High School