

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

Commission on Public Schools



Commission on Public Schools

**Report of the Visiting Team for
Daniel Hand High School**

Madison, CT

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School and Community Summary

School and Community Summary

Madison is located on the Connecticut shoreline, approximately 20 miles east of New Haven and 40 miles south of Hartford. Madison's population was nearly 18,000 as of the 2020 census. Home to one of the most frequently visited parks in the country, Hammonasset State Park, Madison is proud of being emblematic of the Connecticut shoreline and of its tight-knit community despite a million visitors annually. The median income of Madison residents is approximately \$114,000 per year, according to census data. Just over 64 percent of residents have earned a bachelor's degree or higher. According to data from the Connecticut Department of Education, 3.7 percent of families attending the Madison Public Schools are considered economically disadvantaged. A recent uptick in the housing market, along with Madison's diverse offerings, has attracted a variety of families with students from many different backgrounds.

Madison Public Schools consists of six school buildings: one pre-K school, two elementary schools serving students in grades K to 3, one intermediate school for students in grades 4 and 5, one middle school, and one high school. The district currently educates 2,626 students in grades pre-K-12. Students from Madison have the option of enrolling in area technical or magnet high schools for grades 9-12. Additionally, students from other districts have the option to apply to and attend Madison Public Schools if their families elect to pay the per-pupil expenditures. Enrollment in the Madison Public Schools has been declining for several years but is expected to level out and then rebound in the coming years. Four years ago in the 2018-19 school year, the district had 2,763 students. Enrollment trends indicate a projected enrollment of 2,410 for the 2022-23 school year.

The average per-pupil cost is \$21,098, which is above the state average of \$17,629. The total board of education budget is \$60,255,417, and the approved fiscal year 2023 school department budget for Daniel Hand High School is \$10,107,118, including salaries, which is 16.77 percent of the total education budget. The Town of Madison has been and continues to be generous and supportive with respect to allocating resources to its public schools.

The four-year adjusted graduation rate for the Class of 2022 was 91 percent. Outside of the college pathway, for the Class of 2022, 2 percent of students enrolled in a trade or vocational program, 2 percent enrolled in post-grad/prep school, and 5 percent went to other categories (military, employment, gap year). The college entrance rate for the Class of 2019 was 89 percent, and the Class of 2018 had a 94 percent college persistence rate. The drop-out rate in 2018-19 was 0.9 percent. The student attendance rate for the 2020-21 school year was 97.9 percent.

Daniel Hand High School facilitates student-centered learning, as reflected by the town's investment in K-12 curriculum revisions (2014-present). The curricula are focused on developing the profile of a graduate capacities, as well as fostering social and emotional learning. Despite declining enrollment, there has been no elimination of any programs. We continue to offer specialty courses such as commercial photography and an interdisciplinary marine science course, as well as a wide selection of courses for college credit through Advanced Placement (AP) and the University of Connecticut's Early College Experience (ECE) program. Furthermore, the unique trimester schedule affords students the opportunity to take additional courses beyond the minimum graduation requirements, delving into career exploration and personal interests, and ultimately averaging just over 29 credits (four more than the state requirement). Included in our course offerings are regionally and nationally recognized art and music programs. The academic program is further augmented by a plethora of extracurricular activities, including more than 50 active clubs and more than 600 student-athletes participating in interscholastic athletic teams.

Core Values, Beliefs, and Vision of the Graduate

DANIEL HAND HIGH SCHOOL

Mission Statement

Our primary purpose is to graduate enthusiastic life-long learners who are responsible global citizens. Daniel Hand High School students, in collaboration with educators, parents/guardians, and the community, will develop as motivated, self-reliant, creative, and ethical individuals who respect differences in others.

Core Values and Beliefs Statement

The Daniel Hand High School community will provide a safe, supportive, and respectful environment for students to develop critical thinking, creative problem solving, and effective communication. We will cultivate a collaborative and inclusive community that values and affirms the diverse contributions, strengths, and talents of all its members. Our expectation is that students will act with respect, courtesy, and empathy. We will provide an environment for students to find learning opportunities in both success and failure and take responsibility for their words and actions. We bear a responsibility to empower all students to become contributing members of a just society. As a learning community, we value compassion, intellectual curiosity, academic and creative risk-taking, and integrity.

Daniel Hand High School Commitments

The school will...

- provide appropriate facilities, resources, and support services to make learning accessible to all students.

All staff will...

- encourage students to be proactive in their learning, and will challenge students to meet or exceed standards in all programs.

All students and staff will...

- reflect on success and failure in order to develop resilience, perseverance, and a growth mindset.
- benefit from collaboration and partnership with civic, business, higher education, and other community groups and resources.
- engage in emotionally and intellectually safe learning within a secure school facility.

The school community will...

- encourage student curiosity, ingenuity, and creativity, thus empowering students to pursue their own intellectual inquiries.
- foster participation in activities that promote lifelong health and wellness for all staff and students.

LEARNING CULTURE

Learning Culture

The school provides a safe learning culture that ensures equity and fosters shared values among learners, educators, families, and members of the school community. These shared values drive student learning as well as policy, practice, and decision-making while promoting a spirit of collaboration, shared ownership, pride, leadership, social responsibility, and civic engagement. The school community sets high standards for student learning, fosters a growth mindset, and facilitates continuous school improvement to realize the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.

1. The school community provides a safe, positive, respectful, and inclusive culture that ensures equity and honors diversity in identity and thought.
 - 1a. The school community provides a safe environment.
2. The school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate drive student learning, professional practices, learning support, and the provision and allocation of learning resources.
 - 2a. The school has a written document describing its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.
3. The school community takes collective responsibility for the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional well-being of every student and can demonstrate how each student is known, valued, and connected to the school community.
4. The school community's professional culture demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement through the use of research, collaborative learning, innovation, and reflection.
5. The school's culture promotes intellectual risk taking and personal and professional growth.
6. The school has an inclusive definition of leadership and provides school leaders with the authority and responsibility to improve student learning.
7. The school culture fosters civic engagement and social and personal responsibility.

STUDENT LEARNING

Student Learning

The school has a vision of the graduate that includes the attainment of transferable skills, disciplinary/interdisciplinary knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary to prepare learners for their future. Students are assured consistent learning outcomes through a defined curricular experience and have the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge in a variety of creative ways. Students actively participate in authentic learning experiences while practicing the skills and habits of mind to regularly reflect upon, and take ownership of, their learning.

1. The school has a vision of the graduate that includes the attainment of transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for future success and provides feedback to learners and their families on each learner's progress in achieving this vision.
2. There is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills and integrates the school's vision of the graduate.
- 2a. There is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments.
3. Curriculum ensures that learners demonstrate a depth of understanding over a breadth of knowledge.
4. Instructional practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student.
5. Students are active learners who have opportunities to lead their own learning.
6. Learners regularly engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills.
7. Learners demonstrate their learning through a variety of assessment strategies that inform classroom instruction and curriculum.
8. Learners have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning, receive corrective feedback, and use this feedback in meaningful ways to support their learning.
9. Learners use technology across all curricular areas to support, enhance, and demonstrate their learning.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

Professional Practices

The school maintains and implements a school improvement/growth plan, organizational practices, and productive community relationships to meet and support student learning needs. Educators engage in ongoing reflection, collaboration, and professional development to improve their practice and examine evidence of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, programs, and services.

1. The school engages all stakeholders in the development and implementation of a school improvement/growth plan, which reflects the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.
 - 1a. The school has a current school improvement/growth plan.
2. Educators engage in ongoing reflection, formal and informal collaboration, and professional development to improve student learning and well-being.
3. Educators examine evidence of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, and programs and services.
4. Collaborative structures and processes support coordination and implementation of curriculum.
5. School-wide organizational practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student.
6. Educators develop productive student, family, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support learning.

LEARNING SUPPORT

Learning Support

The school has timely, directed, and coordinated interventions for all students. The school provides targeted supports to meet each student's individual needs, including counseling services, health services, library/information services, and other appropriate support services to assist each student in meeting the school's vision of the graduate.

1. All students receive appropriate intervention strategies to support their academic, social, and emotional success.
 - 1a. The school has intervention strategies designed to support students.
2. All students receive counseling services that meet their personal, social, emotional, academic, career, and college counseling needs from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.
3. All students receive health services that ensure their physical and emotional well-being from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.
4. All students receive library/information services that support their learning from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.
5. Identified English Language Learners and students with special needs and 504 plans receive appropriate programs and services that support their learning from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.

LEARNING RESOURCES

Learning Resources

The school has adequate and appropriate time, funding, and facilities to support the realization of its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate. The school and school community provide time, funding, and facilities for student learning and support; teacher collaboration and professional growth; and full implementation of curricular and co-curricular programs in the school. The school has appropriate plans, protocols, and infrastructure in place to ensure consistent delivery of its curriculum, programs, and services.

1. The community and district provide school buildings and facilities that support the delivery of high-quality curriculum, programs, and services.
 - 1a. The community and district provide school buildings and facilities that support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services.
2. The school/district provides time and financial resources to enable researched-based instruction, professional growth, and the development, implementation, and improvement of school programs and services.
3. The community and the district's governing body provide adequate and dependable funding to fully implement the curriculum, including co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.
4. The school/district has short-term and long-term plans to address the capital and maintenance needs of its building and facilities.
5. The school has infrastructure and protocols in place to ensure effective responses in crisis situations.

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 three Commissions: the Commission on Independent Schools (CIS); the Commission on Public Schools (CPS), which is composed of the Committee on Public Elementary, Middle, and High Schools (CPEMHS), and the Committee on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI); and the Commission on International Education (CIE).

As the responsible agency for matters of the evaluation and accreditation of public school member institutions, CPS requires visiting teams to assess the degree to which schools align with the qualitative Standards for Accreditation. The Standards are *Learning Culture, Student Learning, Professional Practices, Learning Support, and Learning Resources*.

The accreditation program for public schools involves a five-step process: the self-reflection conducted by stakeholders at the school; the Collaborative Conference visit, conducted by a team of peer educators and NEASC representatives; the school's development and implementation of a growth/improvement plan; the Decennial Accreditation visit conducted by a team of peer educators and NEASC representatives; and the follow-up program carried out by the school to implement the findings of its own self-reflection, the recommendations of the visiting team, and those identified by the Committee in the follow-up process. Continued accreditation requires that the school participate in the accreditation process over the ten-year cycle and that it show continued progress addressing identified needs.

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Reflection

Accreditation coordinators and a steering committee composed of the professional staff were appointed to supervise the school's self-reflection and Accreditation process. At Daniel Hand High School, a committee of three members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the Accreditation process. The steering committee organized an appropriate committee or committees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people by completing the school self-reflection.

Public schools evaluated by the Commission on Public 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, vision of the graduate, and unique student population. Daniel Hand High School used questionnaires developed by the Commission on Public Schools 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-reflection.

In addition, the professional staff was required to read and vote on Part 2 of the self-reflection to ensure that all voices were heard related to the alignment of the school to the Standards for Accreditation. All professional staff members were expected to participate in the self-reflection process either by participating on a committee or by participating in discussion and evidence gathering to support the school's alignment to the Standards.

The Process Used by the Visiting Team

A visiting team of five members was assigned by the Commission on Public Schools to conduct a Collaborative Conference visit to Daniel Hand High School in Madison, Connecticut. The visiting team members spent two days conducting an in-person visit; reviewed the self-reflection documents, which had been prepared for their examination; met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students and parents; and

observed classes to determine the degree to which the school aligns with the Committee on Public Secondary Schools' and Public Elementary and Middle Schools' Standards for Accreditation. The team also reviewed the proposed priority areas for the school's growth plan to be developed as part of the Accreditation process.

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 within each section of the report. The report includes 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 implement its plan for growth and improvement.

This report of the findings of the visiting team will be forwarded to the Commission on Public Schools, which will make a decision on the Accreditation of Daniel Hand High School.

Foundational Element Ratings

Foundational Element Ratings

Foundational Elements	School's Rating	Visitors' Rating
1.1a - Learning Culture	Meets	Meets
1.2a - Learning Culture	Meets	Meets
2.2a - Student Learning	Does Not Meet	Does Not Meet
3.1a - Professional Practices	Meets	Meets
4.1a - Learning Support	Meets	Meets
5.1a - Learning Resources	Meets	Meets

Foundational Element 1.1a - Learning Culture

Narrative

The school community provides a safe environment that ensures the safety of all students and adults. Daniel Hand High School shares a school resource officer with the nearby middle and elementary schools and also employs two full-time armed security personnel. Custodial staff and teachers on hall duty all have two-way radios and can readily access security and the main office in an emergency. Additionally, the building is equipped with a keyless entry system and 125 video surveillance cameras. These cameras survey hallways as well as entrances and exits, and the data recorded is accessible to administrators, security personnel, and the Madison Police Department.

All fourteen sets of exterior doors automatically lock each morning at 7:25 and remain locked until the end of the school day. Visitors to Daniel Hand are required to enter through the main entrance by buzzing into the building and signing in to the security desk using the school's Raptor system. All students and staff have photo identification badges.

Further safety policies and procedures include monthly fire and lockdown drills and ongoing A.L.I.C.E. training. The responsibility to develop procedural and safety protocols and guidelines is handled by the local fire marshal and police chief.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 1.2a - Learning Culture

Narrative

Daniel Hand High School has a written document describing its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate. The school adopted a written document of core values and beliefs about learning in 2011. Revisions to this document, as well as the mission statement, were completed in the spring of 2022.

A district-wide committee began the process of creating a profile of a graduate in the fall of 2019. The 21st-century skills matrix has been revised and aligned with the school's profile of a graduate. The profile of a graduate matrix is in the process of being aligned and integrated into the high school curriculum. Alignment is complete in some disciplines, and partially in others. Mastery of the profile of a graduate skills is assessed primarily through the completion of two specific courses: Personal Finance and Independent Project.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 2.2a - Student Learning

Narrative

Significant progress has been made to implement a consistent format for curriculum in all courses in all departments across the school, but not all departments have yet to complete the curriculum writing process. A common template, based on the Understanding by Design format, is in use across all courses and departments where curriculum writing is complete. This template includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, skills, instructional strategies, and assessment practices. Courses that are yet to be completed will utilize this format as they complete the curriculum writing process in the next year. In addition, the new profile of a graduate has not yet been added to the curriculum in most existing courses, though plans are underway to revise from the previously used 21st-century capacities matrix to the profile of a graduate criteria.

Rating

Does Not Meet the Standard

Foundational Element 3.1a - Professional Practices

Narrative

The school has a current school improvement/growth plan that includes school-specific goals. The school development plan is derived from relevant priorities and goals from the district development plan. The school development plan lists action steps and goals that inform decision-making related to daily operations as well as department, professional learning community, and faculty meeting time and work.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 4.1a - Learning Support

Narrative

The school has intervention strategies designed to support students. The strategies range from drop-in support in the math lab to scheduled math and reading intervention support. Social and emotional interventions are offered through drop-in visits and appointments with school counselors, the school psychologist, school social workers, and an onsite social worker with Madison Youth and Family Services. The student assistance center is a specific setting open all day to support 504 and general education students. There is a part-time teacher who works with Multilingual Learners, a specific course for students with IEPs, and a therapeutic academic support program in collaboration with Essential School Solutions. The interventions encompass various content areas and support general education students, as well as special education students.

The school has a student support team process in place. This team is comprised of administrators, school counselors, academic interventionists, the school psychologist, and the school nurse. Students are referred by teachers or counselors based on data, such as attendance records, discipline referrals, grades, etc. The student support team reviews Tier 1 interventions to the classroom teachers, and Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions follow, depending on student progress after Tier 1 interventions have been employed. The team evaluates progress every six weeks. This is a cohesive process driven by data and input from different faculty perspectives based on their roles within the building.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 5.1a - Learning Resources

Narrative

The school site and plant mostly support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services; however, this is not true for all non-traditional courses, specifically performing arts, health, and physical education courses. The physical plant, including all traditional classrooms, science labs, library media center, and cafeteria, supports the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services within a safe and secure facility.

While student interests are sufficiently supported through a variety of specialty areas such as the Fab Lab, TV studio, computer labs, robotics lab, art studios, and outdoor athletic fields there are limitations in the physical layout and space of special facilities such as music and physical education spaces, as well as the gymnasium and dining/assembly hall, to meet the needs of all learners, curriculum, and programming.

The school building and facilities are clean and well-maintained and meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Standard 1 - Learning Culture

Narrative

The school community provides a safe, positive, respectful, and inclusive culture that ensures equity and honors diversity in identity and thought. This was evident upon entering the building for the first time. The school walls are adorned with various works of student expression ranging from sculptures created in the Fab Lab, to self-portraits carefully designed in art, to flyers promoting the beliefs of specific clubs. The school also boasts over 60 elective classes and 54 active clubs, in addition to the numerous sports and theater arts programs from which students may choose to participate as indicated in the school's Self-Reflection Report. The school fosters an inclusive culture and honors diversity in identity. Over 80 percent of students feel welcome and nearly 80 percent feel that students from different backgrounds are treated with respect. Ally/safe space stickers adorn classroom doors, and the school provides students with three single-user, gender-neutral bathrooms. The Gender and Sexuality Program (GASP) strives to be a supportive environment for all members of the LGBTQIA+ community. In addition, a solid support staff exists to accommodate the emotional needs of student learners which includes a clinician from Madison Youth and Family Services, a school psychologist, a social worker, and six school counselors. The intimate and genuine nature of the school provides a comfortable atmosphere that fosters critical thinking and creative problem-solving aligned with the school's core values. Parents overwhelmingly commented on how well the school attends to individual needs. Both staff and administrators show genuine concern for their students, sometimes calling families not to relay assignments to students who are absent from school but to check in on their well-being. Included in the school's core values and beliefs is an affirmation that students will be provided with an environment in which they can find learning opportunities in both their successes and failures. To ensure the curriculum is academically equitable to a diversity of learners the school has taken measures to accommodate the needs of its students. A co-teaching model has been introduced in some math classrooms and a math lab, staffed by certified math teachers, both support struggling math students. Both staff and students speak highly about the benefits of the program. The district has also hired both a full-time math and Multilingual Learner (ML) interventionist who regularly meet with identified students. Due to a recent uptick in the multilingual learner (ML) population, the school recently allocated a fractional portion of a teaching assignment to accommodate the needs of its English Language Learners.

The school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate drive student learning, professional practices, learning support, and the provision and allocation of learning resources. The school's 21st-century learning expectations have evolved and been consolidated to include a specific set of 10 skills outlined by the profile of the graduate. Curriculum documents, including formal and informal assessments, will be aligned with the profile of the graduate as they are updated. Alignment is complete in some disciplines, but only partially in others. Developing clear and consistent performance-based assessments within courses will help to ensure that students are meeting the benchmarks outlined by the profile of the graduate. Currently, students must complete two required courses that serve as demonstrations of mastery for the profile of the graduate: Personal Finance and the Independent Project. To expand the menu of course offerings, a number of elective courses aligned with the profile of the graduate have recently been created. World Traveler, for example, offers students a unique opportunity to think as global citizens as they plan a virtual trip to destinations of their choice. In the process, students learn about other cultures, currencies, and the logistics of travel which embody critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills as do learning resources such as the Fab Lab and Mac Lab.

Most members of the school community take collective responsibility for the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional well-being of every student. The school has a well-established student success team (SST) through intensive training and the support of a consultant. The referral process has streamlined how data is collected and utilized. Weekly meetings are held to discuss student referrals and recommend Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions to support student success. In addition, Daniel Hand offers retake opportunities in all courses alongside a Math Lab where students can seek additional support. The school offers students a robust course of studies to accommodate learners at different levels and with diverse interests. The school year is divided into trimesters to allow students the opportunity to pursue a variety of elective courses, but some teachers and parents expressed concerns about courses that may be "bridged," meaning the content of a course may be taught in the first and third trimesters. Students may even complete a full-year mathematics course in the first and second trimesters and not take another mathematics course until the second trimester of the following year. In addition to the

students' intellectual well-being, the school community takes responsibility for the students' social and emotional well-being through various programs. The advisory program helps students make meaningful connections, fosters social/emotional development, and further strengthens the overall school community. For example, during advisory, students made a collaborative effort to pull strings attached to a rubber band to “grab” and stack a set of paper cups. Based on the results from a Madison Youth and Family Services health survey, which takes place every two years, school counseling and support staff, the health curriculum, and advisory are working to adjust and design curriculum and resources to address a recent uptick in student stress, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. Wellness Wednesday was also implemented during the 2020-2021 school year which allocates a thirty-minute block of time for both students and staff to disengage from academic responsibilities to encourage relaxation and reduce stress. The school community clearly demonstrates how each student is known, valued, and connected to the school community. During the parent interview, several parents spoke highly about how well their children are supported and genuinely cared for at the school. Nearly 82 percent of students report that at least one caring adult knows them well.

The school community's professional culture adequately demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement through the use of research, collaborative learning, innovation, and reflection. There is a clear set of guidelines that outline the evaluation process at Daniel Hand. This process is often calibrated by curriculum coordinators as well as administrators to be sure evaluations are fair and provide teachers with adequate feedback to improve their instruction. Staff periodically participate in school-wide professional development as well as professional development opportunities led by other staff members, known as Madison Academy. For example, a member who is fluent in Google Classroom may run a session to help fellow staff members set up and manage their own Google Classrooms. Teachers are also encouraged to seek professional development opportunities offered by the Bureau of Education and Research (BER). While professional learning communities (PLCs) offer staff an opportunity to collaborate with colleagues within departments, teachers report that more time is needed to effectively improve instruction. Currently, teachers reflect only informally on teaching practices and common assessments.

The school's culture strives to promote intellectual risk taking and personal and professional growth. An overwhelming majority of students believe that learning from mistakes is an integral part of the learning process and is clearly valued in the school's core values. “[Daniel Hand] will provide an environment for students to find learning opportunities in both success and failure...” Staff members foster this culture. Virtually all staff surveyed feel that they encourage students to try new things or experiment. A student, who was working on an Independent Project in the Fab Lab, took the initiative to learn how to operate the software used to create a 3-D model of a house that he designed without any formal training. Students in a culinary arts program were tasked with creating their own recipes with only a list of ingredients that needed to be incorporated. In addition to the competitive athletic programs, numerous clubs and activities offer students opportunities for personal growth. Academically, many students choose to pursue challenging coursework to prepare themselves for a four-year college or university. Sixty-nine percent of all eleventh and twelfth-grade students are enrolled in Early College Experience or Advanced Placement coursework. Recent data indicates 260 students are taking AP courses.

The school is implementing an inclusive definition of leadership and clearly provides school leaders with the authority and responsibility to improve student learning. Led by curriculum coordinators, teachers participate in the curriculum writing process. Teachers work in teams to write, review, and revise different curricula. A panel of teachers continues to serve on a curriculum review council before the curriculum is presented to the board of education for adoption. Teachers were also afforded an opportunity to propose and develop a number of new elective courses to foster student learning in a variety of non-traditional courses. Overall, 74 percent of teachers agree that “At this school, the principal, and other school leaders, ask educators like me how to make this school better.” Parents are invited to participate in district planning through organizations such as the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and the Special Education Parent Teacher Organization (SEPTO). At the administrative level, the principal is afforded the opportunity to make decisions that support school initiatives. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the principal was actively involved in district-wide decisions. In addition, the principal supported an initiative made by a staff member who proposed the idea of the Fab Lab which was ultimately funded by the board of education.

The school culture adequately fosters civic engagement and social and personal responsibility. Based on the student survey, 74.8 percent of students report that they were engaged with current social issues, which is evident in the variety of course offerings, including civics and American Government, but also in the various clubs and organizations, including Caring for CT, in which

students come together to plan and participate in volunteer activities that benefit the local community. Charitable organizations such as Smiles for Smilow and UNICEF club also demonstrate a civic-minded interest. Students have even addressed issues such as raising awareness about a lack of sidewalks in town or recycling efforts. The student council offers students an opportunity for leadership roles within the school community. Students are also involved in other roles that foster civic engagement. Tiger Tutors assist middle school students with academics. In addition, a tour of the facility was led by two students who serve as liaisons between the school community and the board of education. The Daniel Hand Code of Conduct outlines behavioral expectations and personal responsibility by which students abide. More than 95 percent of students indicate that they take responsibility for their actions. In fact, physical altercations are virtually non-existent according to administrative staff.

Sources of Evidence

- central office personnel
- classroom observations
- community members
- department leaders
- facility tour
- NEASC survey
- parents
- school leadership
- self-reflection
- student work
- students
- teacher interview
- teachers

Standard 2 - Student Learning

Narrative

Daniel Hand High School has a profile of a graduate in place that articulates 10 capacities meant to encompass the desired skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for future success. The school often provides feedback to learners, but inconsistently communicates progress toward achieving the capacities embedded in the profile of a graduate with families. The profile of a graduate was revised in 2019 to better reflect changing needs by measuring student attainment of transferable skills within the areas of critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration/communication, self-direction, and global thinking. Each capacity is accompanied by a concise rubric, written from a student-centered perspective, that clearly defines the capacity and criteria necessary to reach each benchmark within the rubric. The profile of a graduate is available for staff, students, and parents to access on the school's website. The curriculum is in the process of being revised to integrate and embed profile of a graduate capacities and rubrics. Beginning with the graduating class of 2023 and as part of the mastery-based diploma assessment, all students must take personal finance and complete an independent project, both of which encourage students to develop skills that will take them beyond Daniel Hand High School. These two classes combined evaluate students in all 10 capacities found within the profile of a graduate. Currently, there is no consistent method of long-term tracking of skill acquisition or for reporting formal results relating to the profile of graduate skill acquisition to parents. According to department leaders and central office administrators, the district has clear procedures in place to evaluate students in these capacities beginning in elementary school, but they have not yet developed a method that can track how students have progressed since assessments differ depending on the classes students take, as well as concerns regarding student privacy.

The school does not yet have a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills and integrates the school's profile of a graduate. The school is making progress in developing its curriculum using Understanding by Design (UbD) practices. The curriculum includes standards, essential questions, enduring understandings, and evidence of the acquisition of skills and knowledge. Curriculum in a uniform format is in place for most departments, with physical education, health and wellness, school counseling, and performing arts scheduled for completion this school year. When most curricular materials were written, they included connections to the 21st-century skills matrix previously used by the school. Updates to include the newly adopted profile of a graduate criteria are incomplete but are in progress and have been completed in curricular areas that have most recently been revised, such as science. The Madison School District has a curriculum writing and revision cycle in place which outlines five phases of curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation. A team of educators works to continually revise the curriculum at the building and district levels. The completed curriculum is publicly available on the district website, which shows Stage 1/Learning Goals for the curriculum for each unit. Faculty can access the full curriculum via EduPlanet21, which also includes Stage 2/Assessment Evidence and Stage 3/Learning Plan elements of the curriculum.

At Daniel Hand High School, the completed curriculum ensures that learners demonstrate a depth of understanding over a breadth of knowledge. Numerous courses, as stated in the program of studies, require prerequisites, where students must use prior knowledge to apply to the subsequent classes. There are many opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching, both formally in co-taught classes across disciplines and informally through class assignments. In the Independent Project course required of all students for graduation, students have the opportunity to delve deeply into a topic of their choosing by utilizing interdisciplinary skills and project-based learning to create an authentic learning experience. End-of-unit projects and assessments often require students to demonstrate an understanding of key concepts and ideas rather than regurgitation of facts. The math department has begun the process of implementing *Illustrative Math*, whose aim is to provide enduring understandings of math.

Instructional practices are designed to meet the learning needs of some students. Courses are offered at four levels: UCONN ECE/AP, level 1 honors, level 2 college prep, and level 3. Co-taught classes led by a regular education and special education teacher help students with IEPs reach the curriculum while reading and math specialists and an ELL teacher also provide interventions as needed. Students have the opportunity to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways beyond traditional written assignments. In observations in social studies and career and technical education classes, students were provided options with regard to projects,

ranging from choosing the topic of their project to the format in which they were going to demonstrate their learning. All curricular areas have required common performance-based assessments that must be completed at the end of each unit. In an academic support class, teachers work with students to provide additional support in order to ensure the students understand what they are learning and make modifications, as necessary. Teachers use a plethora of formative assessments to adjust instruction to fill any gaps that may exist, utilizing strategies such as entrance and exit tickets, partner sharing, individual whiteboards, and more. According to the NEASC survey of faculty, 85 percent of teachers say they are successful at differentiation. Differentiation of work was evident in some classes. Modified assignments for special education students demonstrate adjustments made to meet the learning needs of that population of students. Differentiation strategies are often absent from the written curriculum.

In some classes, students are provided opportunities to be active learners who are afforded the ability to take the lead in their own learning. A district-wide priority has been to implement performance-based assessments. Examples of this include civic action plans developed in civics classes, Spanish volunteer opportunities, an English self-reflection trimester exam, math students creating their own year-end review games, physics and engineering student-created coding programs that solve real-world problems, a technology education project where students selected a topic of interest and created a news story that involved interviews, voiceovers, and video editing, and the Independent Project course where all students are required to select an area of interest, delve deeper into their selection and ultimately present their findings. Teachers offer direction and support as needed. The Fab Lab allows students to work independently on projects of their own choice, utilizing a wide range of technological resources such as 3D printers, sewing machines, and laser cutting devices. Students also have the freedom to select electives that suit their interests. While many classes do offer a range of opportunities for students to lead in their own learning, many classes are more teacher-directed, relying on lectures, teacher-led discussions, independent seatwork, and other non-student-directed learning.

Learners at Daniel Hand High School regularly engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills. This is achieved through individual and group projects, essays, and many other forms of assessment. For example, students in AP US History complete oral history projects designed to include research, interviews, and reflection regarding individual and personal connections to historically significant events. Biology students analyze and synthesize data to create complex models of body systems, allowing them to more fully understand the various mechanisms that allow organisms to function. Humanities students explore the idea of 'thinkers' versus 'producers,' relating the concept not just to the literature and cultures they are studying, but also to the goals the school district has for students. English students write a variety of types of essays requiring them to analyze and synthesize information to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the literature and make skillful connections. Parents report that their children excel once outside of school because of the academic skills learned and habits engrained while students at Daniel Hand High School. According to administrators and department supervisors, the curriculum is written in such a way that each unit has a culminating performance-based assessment that requires students to demonstrate their understandings using inquiry and a range of higher order thinking skills depending on the assignment.

Learners have the opportunity to demonstrate their learning through a variety of assessment strategies that inform classroom instruction and curriculum. Ninety-five percent of teachers report that they use a variety of assessments to understand student learning and 93 percent indicate that they use more than just formal tests to measure understanding. The written curriculum in most courses allows for a variety of assessments to be utilized. In addition, many departments use common rubrics, while common assessments are required across classes that are taught by multiple teachers. Teachers also have the ability to adjust instruction and assessment based on analysis of student work and student needs and performance. Students have the opportunity to demonstrate their learning through traditional means, but also through showcasing their learning at English symposiums, art exhibits, as well as other class projects, presentations, and school performances. In classroom observations, students were observed playing review games, completing graphic organizers, and taking part in small-group and whole-class discussions. Teachers circulated around the classrooms, assisting students and providing additional support to ensure student learning was taking place. A system is in place that allows for curriculum revisions even when a given department is not due for review. This is used to make adjustments to performance-based assessments and other forms of assessment. Though teachers are often adjusting instruction as needed, they do report that there is little formal time planned for collaboration with colleagues to discuss, reflect upon, and analyze student work in order to make curricular adjustments and alignments. PLC time is usually scheduled twice monthly, but that time is often spent taking care of departmental or other needs and consequently, teachers do not have enough time to collaborate effectively.

Students have many opportunities to demonstrate their learning, receive corrective feedback, and use feedback in meaningful ways to support their learning. Daniel Hand High School has retake procedures that apply to whole departments or courses for class assessments, allowing students to learn from previous work and demonstrate their mastery of skills and content. About 70 percent of students report that they are given the opportunity to revise and improve their grades. Technology has afforded teachers the opportunity to provide more timely feedback on assignments since teachers can view documents through Google Classroom and offer written and verbal feedback in a real-time setting. Through the use of Google Forms and similar tools, teachers receive real-time results to questions asked and are able to provide immediate corrective feedback to students. Teachers were also observed in several classes checking in with students while completing in-class work, offering suggestions, providing help, and offering other feedback. Department and assignment-specific rubrics are widely used to communicate expected outcomes and inform students with positive or corrective feedback. In observed samples of student work, teachers added to Google Docs, used rubrics, and added individual comments as means of providing feedback. The quality of teacher feedback ranged from constructive to critical, though most was supportive. Teachers report a desire for more collaborative time to evaluate student data in order to inform future instruction. The school system has recently purchased a universal screener program that will help to collect and organize data.

Learners often use technology across all curricular areas to support, enhance, and demonstrate their learning. All students have access to Chromebooks as part of the 1:1 Chromebook initiative. Assignments and class materials are posted to Google Classroom and accessible to students. This also supports in-class research using Google Scholar, teacher-provided websites, and other research opportunities online. Supportive technology such as speech-to-text and Google Translate help to make curriculum accessible to students who benefit from those services. Specialized software and hardware is used in math, career and technical education, and art classrooms to support curriculum and instruction. This year, the school has opened a nationally certified Fab Lab, which includes many types of technologies (3D printers, sewing machines, laser and vinyl cutting machines, computers, etc.) available to students and teachers to use to support the curriculum and allow for individual or independent learning. Promethean Boards are brand new this year and replace previously used Smartboards. Staff reports that ongoing professional development related to integrating technology into instruction would be beneficial.

Sources of Evidence

- central office personnel
- classroom observations
- department leaders

- NEASC survey
- parents
- school leadership
- self-reflection
- student work
- students
- teachers

Standard 3 - Professional Practices

Narrative

The school deliberately engages all stakeholders in the development and implementation of a school improvement/growth plan, which reflects the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and the profile of a graduate. The school development plan is a comprehensive 37-page document that is derived from relevant aspects of the district development plan's goals and objectives. Teachers, administrators, and program coordinators meet at the end of each school year to develop a draft plan. Students provide input that leads to areas of need or goals based on district surveys and the student leadership team. The draft is revisited at the beginning of the school year and shared again with faculty and staff. The Profile of a Graduate Student Growth and Development Matrix, created by multiple stakeholders over the course of several years, appears in the school development plan to guide their work.

Although an hour a week after school is scheduled for faculty, department, and PLC meetings, there is no formal time during the school day for teachers to collaborate and reflect on ways to improve student learning and well-being. The school provides consistent time for faculty, department, and PLC meetings every Tuesday after school for an hour on a rotating basis. Program coordinators may elect to replace department meeting time with PLC meetings to support teacher collaboration and professional development for planning instruction and calibrating grades and grade books. Teachers collaborate informally before or after school and in sporadic moments throughout the school day to share resources, broadly discuss student achievement on assessments, and plan ideas for lessons. Large-scale data like SAT scores are used to make some decisions, and although a new STAR program will provide student benchmark data to inform intervention and support, other forms of consistent data are not yet being identified and analyzed to improve student learning and well-being. Teachers, program coordinators, and administrators expressed a need for more uninterrupted and consistent PLC collaboration time as well as difficulty for some teachers who do not share common courses with other colleagues to engage in PLCs. More systematic and consistent analysis of data to inform reflection, collaboration, and professional development would better support decisions to improve student learning and well-being.

The examination of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, and programs and services is not a common practice at the school. Pockets of educators consistently examine grades, attendance, and behavior data in SST meetings, SAT score and skill results in math department meetings, and well-being data coordinated between the Madison Youth and Families Services and the high school. Departments have common summative assessments for most courses, and although PLCs sometimes examine the results of these assessments, such data analysis is not consistently predictable based on the competing priorities of PLCs and department meetings. Teachers focus their attention on and share student achievement results on common assessments in quick informal passing moments. Teachers have the autonomy to modify the resources and instructional strategies presented in Stage 3 of the Understanding by Design curriculum unit maps to meet the needs of a variety of learners, and with the approval of the assistant superintendent through the program coordinator, they may also adjust Stage 2 assessments; however, changes to Stage 1 related to skills, concepts, or knowledge in units must go through an extensive curriculum revision process before approval. Once other forms of data that can inform curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, and programs and services are identified and systematically and routinely analyzed, then educators will be better able to meet the needs of a variety of students.

Collaborative structures and processes generally support the coordination and implementation of the curriculum. The district and school have designated rotating faculty, department, and PLC time on Tuesdays after school every week for an hour. Program coordinators facilitate department meetings meant to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices. PLCs exist for teachers with common courses, but a formalized structure and process for work within that PLC time does not yet exist. Although they have some PLC time each month, most teachers do not have common planning time during the school day, and so curriculum collaboration occurs in infrequent passing moments. Teacher feedback regarding curriculum is shared through program coordinators to the building and district administration in formal ways like building-program coordinator meetings every two weeks and monthly central office meetings. An extensive curriculum process exists for adjustments and revision to support coordination and implementation of curriculum, allowing for immediate changes to occur to their Understanding by Design curriculum maps for Stage 3 and sometimes Stage 2.

School-wide organizational practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student. Daniel Hand High School grants access to challenging academic experiences for all learners, has learning environments and practices that are inclusive, and has opportunities for students to learn with and from students who are different from them. The student support team and its accompanying system identify and provide interventions for students in literacy, executive functioning, and other academic and behavioral areas. The Madison Youth and Family Services partners with the school to provide programming like guest speakers on topics related to the health and physical education curricula. Some classes, in mostly math and English, are co-taught with content-area teachers and special educators. A literacy instructional coach and a newly hired math instructional coach support educators in implementing curriculum and instructional practices. A trimester schedule provides opportunities like allowing students to take more elective classes than in a traditional structure but also presents some issues. Some Advanced Placement (AP) classes, for instance, occur only over two trimesters not three, so teachers sometimes offer review and supplemental learning on their own time to students before the AP exams in May. The Effective School Solutions partnership with the school offers support to students with great social-emotional learning needs while also ensuring their academic development. The Fab Lab and associated practices for its use are currently being developed to allow students in classes as well as during their own time to engage in hands-on, authentic maker space type projects.

Educators are implementing developed productive student, family, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support learning. The Effective School Solutions program scaffolds students with intensive learning needs. The Madison Youth and Family Services organization has a place in the building for students to receive services as well as partners with the school to supplement the health and physical education programs. Blood drives through the American Red Cross occur in some of the school spaces like the gymnasium or the dining and assembly hall each school year. The College Board offers a variety of Advanced Placement courses to students, and the University of Connecticut collaborates with the school through many Early College Experience courses that students can take advantage of throughout their time at Daniel Hand. The school offers an extensive variety of clubs, sports, and activities for students and also provides families with multiple opportunities for involvement through the PTO, open house, and newly instituted parent-teacher conferences.

Sources of Evidence

- central office personnel
- classroom observations
- department leaders
- NEASC survey
- school leadership
- school support staff
- self-reflection
- students
- teacher interview
- teachers

Standard 4 - Learning Support

Narrative

All students receive appropriate intervention strategies to support their academic, social, and emotional success. The student support team purposefully reviews and assigns appropriate intervention strategies to support student academic, social, and emotional success. Teachers or counselors may refer students to the SST process. Data, such as attendance records, discipline referrals, and grades, are a factor in referring a student and a consideration when developing intervention plans. Administrators report that the intervention plans, which may include counseling through school or community-based personnel, executive functioning skill development, math/reading support, and support through the student assistance center, are housed in RTI Direct. The math and reading support is offered during the student's free period which meets opposite lunch. The frequency of support is in the goal set by the SST. An administrator stated the first step in the SST process is to review data and share Tier 1 interventions implemented by the student's classroom teachers. Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions follow, depending on student progress after Tier 1 interventions have been employed. Faculty shared that the forms used for the SST process are user-friendly; however, from their perspective, it takes some time to put interventions into place. Central office administrators state that the SST system has been enhanced through collaboration with LEARN, one of six regional education support centers in Connecticut, in 2021. Between 70 and 75 percent of families report that they know who to go to in the school if their child needs academic or social-emotional help. Fifty percent of families feel the school has a clear and timely referral process if their child needs services or support. In addition to the intervention support for struggling learners, the math learning lab, staffed by the math department, is available throughout the school day for extra help for all students. There is also a referral process in place for students who may need to be a part of the therapeutic academic support program, Essential School Solutions. Daniel Hand High School personnel are trained to work with the social workers employed by ESS. According to faculty, this program provides an additional level of support through daily counseling, group counseling, and a designated special education teacher for students who are able to take classes at the school but need emotional coping skills.

Students frequently receive counseling services that meet their personal, social, emotional, academic, career, and college counseling needs from adequate, certified/licensed personnel. There are five school counselors and one career and college counselor. Students can schedule appointments with school counselors to discuss academics, scheduling, post-secondary, and social/emotional concerns. School counselors explained that they are currently working on revising the school counseling curriculum. They also use Google Classroom and Naviance as instructional tools for students. Counselors are members of the student support team, which meets biweekly to collaborate and discuss students who need assistance. Counselors can also refer struggling students to the SST process in order to meet their social, emotional, and academic needs. There is an office in the school's "helping hallway" where any student can come in throughout the day to seek help from the school psychologist, the social worker, or the licensed clinical social worker who works in collaboration with the school through Madison Youth and Family Services. Approximately 85 percent of the faculty agree that all students receive counseling services that meet their personal, social emotional, academic, and college counseling needs from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.

Students routinely receive health services from adequate, certified/licensed personnel, who ensure their physical and emotional well-being. The school employs one nurse, one health paraprofessional, and one athletic trainer. Ninety-two percent of families report that the nurse is available when their child needs help, and 75 percent agree that the health staff effectively supports their child's well-being. Seventy-five percent of the students agree that the nurse is available when needed. During the meeting with the faculty, staff members stated that students feel comfortable visiting the nurse's office when needed. The Self-Reflection Report shared that health services provide emergency services, ongoing intervention for students with chronic health concerns, and professional development for school staff once a year. In addition, the athletic coaching staff meets with the nurse and the trainer once per year to review protocols.

Students consistently receive library/information services that support their learning from adequate certified/licensed personnel. The library media center is staffed with one certified library media specialist and two paraprofessionals and is open daily from 7:00 am and 4:00 pm. Student representatives shared that many students visit the Fab Lab, which is housed in the library media center, but they also visit the library for research

and to complete work. The library media specialist reports that 200 to 300 students visit the library daily. The library media specialist collaborates with the Independent Project class, attends department meetings, and is a resource for teachers and students during research assignments. Faculty members from the English, social studies, and the world languages departments affirmed that the library media specialist works with their departments to help students with research skills and shares applicable resources with faculty. Ninety-three percent of the staff agrees that the library/information services effectively support students' learning. The library media specialist's responsibilities include collection development, curriculum, planning and co-teaching across curricula, and overseeing the circulation of materials and Chromebooks. The library houses 37 databases for research and maintains subscriptions, such as WeVideo Pro for students to create videos for project-based learning. Approximately 90 percent of the students claim that they feel comfortable using the library when they want to, including before and after school.

Identified multilingual learners and students with special needs and 504 plans consistently receive appropriate programs and services that support their learning from adequate, certified/licensed personnel. In addition to daily classroom instruction support, the Self-Reflection Report states there is one math interventionist, one reading specialist, 10 special education teachers, nine special education paraprofessionals, 1.2 district-wide English Language Learner instructor, 1.6 school psychologists, one social worker, six school counselors, and one licensed clinical social worker through Madison Youth and Family Services. The ELL instructor uses a "push-in" support model one period per day in the classrooms of ELL students. Special education support includes the co-teaching model in eight math classes, three English classes, and one Spanish class. Support service staff reports that students with IEPs are enrolled in an academic seminar class. There is also a small group of students who need the life skills program, which is comprised of self-contained English and math skills classes. Math and ELA coaches are in place to support instructional strategies for all students, including multilingual learners, special education, and 504 students. There is a student assistance center that offers support throughout the day for students with 504 plans as well as for general education students. Some students are scheduled into the center during their free period, or they may drop in. Two paraprofessionals are scheduled into the center during the day. Student representatives shared that teachers teach in different ways to help all students. Ninety-seven percent of the faculty believe that students with IEPs and 504 plans receive appropriate services and support.

Sources of Evidence

- central office personnel
- department leaders
- facility tour
- NEASC survey
- school leadership
- school support staff
- self-reflection
- students
- teacher interview
- teachers

Standard 5 - Learning Resources

Narrative

The community and district provide a school building and facilities that mostly support the delivery of high-quality curriculum, programs, and services. Daniel Hand High School is a newer building, having been built only 20 years ago. At present, a portion of the building is inaccessible due to faulty HVAC equipment which resulted in a substantial leak and damage to an area of the building. While the school offers ample classroom and office space, the non-traditional spaces are not well suited for their intended purposes. For example, the performing arts classes take place in multi-purpose rooms which limits both teachers and students. Since Daniel Hand High School does not have an auditorium, the dining hall also serves as an assembly space. Although the dining and assembly hall recently upgraded its sound system and will also get a lighting upgrade, the space is not sufficiently sized to deliver a program to the entire student body. As such, when assemblies are too large for the space, the large gym is utilized, displacing physical education classes. As a result, physical education classes are relegated to the smaller auxiliary gym or traditional classrooms, particularly when cold or inclement weather precludes classes from being held outdoors. Given that Daniel Hand is a comprehensive high school with ample performing arts courses as well as physical education and health requirements, the scheduling and management of these spaces needs improvement to best meet the needs of all programming.

Although the school and district provide sufficient time and considerable financial resources to support professional development, there is no formal time during the school day specifically set aside to support research-based instruction and professional collaboration among educators. The faculty survey indicates that more than 70 percent of teachers agree that they are given sufficient time and funding for collaboration, planning, and professional development. Throughout the school year, Daniel Hand High School has six full-day and two half-day professional development days. Daniel Hand High School and Madison Public Schools hold weekly meetings each Tuesday; these meetings rotate between staff meetings, department meetings, and professional learning communities. Topics across all meetings include district and building initiatives, mandated training, and curriculum writing and review. Department coordinators lead the work in their departments and most shared that their voices are heard and valued in leadership meetings with administrators. Although PLCs are in place at Daniel Hand, a more systematic approach to their purpose and implementation would help promote the school's efforts to ensure collaboration, particularly as it applies to reviewing student work, calibrating assessments, and reflecting on effective instructional practices.

The community and the district's governing body provide adequate and dependable funding to fully implement the curriculum, including co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities. Daniel Hand High School offers an array of programs and services, ranging from special education and multilingual learners to numerous Advanced Placement and UConn Early College Experience courses. There are several co-taught classes, mainly in mathematics and English classrooms, as well as a math learning lab that is accessible to students daily. In addition, the school's profile of a graduate requires students to successfully complete two courses upon graduation, Independent Project and Personal Finance. Daniel Hand High School is a 1:1 school, providing Chromebooks to all students. There is reliable wireless internet throughout the building as well as additional technology access afforded in the library, the Mac lab, and the Fab Lab, a brand new space well-outfitted with several pieces of equipment including computers, sewing machines, a serger, 3D printers, a laser cutter, a vinyl machine, and a computer numerical control (CNC) machine.

The school and district maintain both short-term and long-term plans to address the capital and maintenance needs of its building and facilities. Madison Public Schools is in year five of a ten-year capital improvement plan, and the town recently approved a school renewal plan that will adjust the district's capital maintenance plan by building a new elementary school, closing both current elementary schools, and renovating the remaining two schools in the district. While Daniel Hand High School is not directly impacted by the renewal plan, the decision to close the two oldest buildings in the district will free up capital funds from which Daniel Hand may benefit.

Central office and building administration recognize the limitations of certain spaces within Daniel Hand High School, particularly in the performing arts, health, physical education, and career and technical education courses. Consequently, there is a 50 million dollar plan to be disseminated through three school buildings, with Daniel Hand being one of them. This money is intended to address necessary HVAC repairs as well as a

redesign of some non-traditional classroom spaces. This budgetary commitment will help ensure that curriculum and instruction can be delivered more efficaciously.

Daniel Hand High School has the infrastructure and protocols in place to ensure effective responses in crisis situations. Lockdown and evacuation drills are practiced monthly, and muster locations are posted in every classroom. In February 2020, the district began Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate (A.L.I.C.E.) training, but that training was interrupted and delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While training recently resumed in the fall of 2022, very little training has been done with students. School staff has been issued personal alert locators which, upon activation, relay the teacher's location to the Madison Police Department and the school administration. Ninety-five percent of faculty believe there are clear policies and procedures for managing crisis situations, while 83 percent of students know what to do in the event of a crisis.

At present, the school shares a school resource Officer with the nearby middle and elementary schools and also employs two full-time armed security personnel. Custodial staff and teachers on hall duty all have two-way radios and can readily access security and the main office in an emergency. Additionally, the building is equipped with a keyless entry system and video surveillance. The responsibility to develop procedural and safety protocols and guidelines is handled by the local fire marshal and police chief.

Sources of Evidence

- central office personnel
- classroom observations
- department leaders
- facility tour
- NEASC survey
- parents
- school leadership
- self-reflection
- teachers

Priority Areas

Priority Area

Priority Area #1

The Collaborative Conference visiting team recommends a modification to the priority area identified by the school.

School Response

Complete the process of writing a curriculum driven by our core values and beliefs for remaining content areas (physical education, health and wellness, and the performing arts) and fully embed the profile of a graduate capacities and rubrics into the Madison Public Schools Board of Education approved curricula. Utilize the written curriculum to develop a system to track and communicate student progress and growth toward mastery. (1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 4.1, 4.2)

Reasoning:

Because the core values and beliefs statement and profile of a graduate capacities and rubrics have been reviewed and updated, the current learning expectations need to align and provide students with more challenging opportunities as they leave Daniel Hand High School. Additionally, to meet Foundational Element 2.2a, Daniel Hand High School needs to complete all curricula in a common format to ensure high-quality instruction.

Visiting Team Response

The school is in the process of writing a curriculum driven by its core values and beliefs, with courses in physical education, health and wellness, and the performing arts remaining. Courses that are rewritten use the Understanding by Design template adopted by the district and include embedded capacities of the profile of a graduate. Once all courses have curriculum rewritten in the Understanding by Design format with embedded capacities of the profile of a graduate, the school will improve consistency and increase equitable outcomes for all students within departments and throughout the school.

The team suggests that part of the Priority Area that specifies “utilize written curriculum to develop a system to track and communicate student progress and growth towards mastery” become a Recommendation rather than a Priority Area to narrow the scope of this Priority Area.

Priority Area

Priority Area #2

The Collaborative Conference visiting team recommends a modification to the priority area identified by the school.

“Improve the structure of PLCs to support curriculum development and revisions, analysis of student data, action research on instructional strategies that support all learners, and collaboration among team members.”

School Response

Support the expansion and improvement of practice to stimulate professional growth and effectiveness in meeting the needs of today's learners, including best practices for PLC and collaborative time while expanding the use of student data to inform instruction. (1.4, 1.5, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 3.2, 3.4, 4.5)

Reasoning:

Although collaborative time has been allocated weekly, the use of this time is inconsistent and minimally focuses on student data. Beginning in the 2022-23 school year, an effort is being made to minimize disruptions to scheduled collaborative time over the course of the school year. Consequently, the reimagined use of this time will provide teachers with necessary professional development opportunities focused on instructional strategies, including leveraging the use of technology to meet the ever-changing needs of our students.

Visiting Team Response

The team recommends a modification to the Priority Area, offering the above revision to increase the clarity and focus of the spirit intended for the goal. The district and school have allocated time devoted to teacher collaboration in PLCs in after-school meetings throughout the year; however, the occurrence of these PLCs is inconsistent, varying from once to twice a month, or these meetings are disrupted by other kinds of priorities or needs. Once the school improves the structure of PLCs, teachers and administrators will be able to use this collaboration time more effectively and with greater efficiency in service of student learning.

Priority Area

Priority Area #3

The Collaborative Conference visiting team **does not concur** with the priority area identified by the school.

School Response

Communicate and uphold the current tiered system of support for all learners to thrive emotionally, socially, and academically. (4.1, 4.5)

Reasoning:

To build upon the current SRBI and student support team guidelines and protocols to ensure appropriate services and support for all students, our faculty must understand this process and use it with fidelity.

Visiting Team Response

The team does not concur with the Priority Area identified by the school because the school's current SRBI and student support team have clear guidelines and protocols that identify and support students in need of academic, mental, emotional, and behavioral intervention. The clarity in steps and procedures, summarized in a developed flowchart, is robust and somewhat unique for a high school, leading to improved outcomes for most students. Faculty fidelity to the system of multitiered supports and interventions should be addressed on an as-needed basis.

Priority Area

Priority Area #4

The Collaborative Conference visiting team **does not concur** with the priority area identified by the school.

School Response

Promote social and emotional mental health and well-being through the expansion of programs such as advisory, the helping hallway, and Wellness Wednesday. (1.3)

Reasoning:

At the beginning of the 2022-23 school year, Daniel Hand High School implemented a new advisory program, aptly named advisory, to help support and promote our school's vision for social and emotional mental health and well-being, which is also supported by the helping hallway and Wellness Wednesday. Social, emotional, and mental health continue to be an area of focus.

Visiting Team Response

The team does not concur with the Priority Area identified by the school because these programs are already underway and being reviewed and implemented currently. Use of these programs should continue as a normal operating procedure based on data-driven decision-making to direct potential changes or alterations.

Priority Area

Priority Area #5

The Collaborative Conference visiting team recommends a modification to the priority area identified by the school.

“Develop plans to address the limitations of the physical layout and space of special facilities (i.e. music and physical education rooms, as well as the gymnasium and dining/assembly hall) to meet the needs of all learners, curriculum, and programming.”

School Response

Maximize the use of our facilities to improve existing support for programming, high-quality curriculums, and delivery of instruction and services. (5.1, 5.3, 5.4)

Reasoning:

While our building currently supports all programming, updates and upgrades to various aspects of our building, including the HVAC system and furniture, will help address any limitations to our physical plant to guarantee that we have the appropriate spaces available to deliver high-quality instruction.

Visiting Team Response

The team recommends a modification to the Priority Area, offering the above revision because the current wording of the goal does not address the particular concerns raised in multiple meetings with faculty and administrators as well as in the Self-Reflection Report. Stakeholders identified the specific areas of need as written in the Visiting Team's recommended modification of the above, with wording taken mostly from an Area of Growth identified by the Self-Reflection committee in the Self-Reflection Report. Once the school identifies ways to address the limitations of physical spaces in the building, curriculum and programs can better serve and meet the needs of all students.

Commendations

Commendation

The commitment to the safety of the school community

Commendation

The commitment of the district to fund equipment and technology to support the curriculum, programs, and services

Commendation

The district's robust profile of a graduate that is in use at all grade levels

Commendation

The wide range of opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning through project-based learning and other authentic performance-based options

Commendation

The school's use of a wide range of technology to enhance student learning

Commendation

The Fab Lab that provides opportunities for hands-on, authentic project-based learning

Commendation

The robust system and processes that provide interventions to support the learning needs of all students

Commendation

The quantity and variety of student, family, community, business, and higher education partnerships, such as ESS and Madison Youth and Family Services that support learning

Commendation

The wide variety of support systems provided to students

Commendation

The positive, respectful, and inclusive culture that promotes and supports diversity in identity and thought within the school community

Recommendations

Recommendation

Improve the functionality of the HVAC system to ensure consistent, safe, and comfortable temperatures and airflow throughout the building

Recommendation

Develop and implement a system to communicate progress toward the achievement of the profile of a graduate to parents, and families

Recommendation

Incorporate the profile of a graduate criteria into all written curricula

Recommendation

Identify consistent forms of data to allow educators to improve student learning and well-being and make informed decisions for adjustments to curriculum, assessments, instruction, and other programs and services

Recommendation

Develop structures, protocols, and time within the school day to support professional learning communities in analyzing data and evidence of student learning, collaborating and coordinating curriculum, sharing and researching instructional strategies, and improving programs and services

Recommendation

Assure consistent and dependable PLC time to support educator common planning, grade calibration, and alignment of practices and programs

Recommendation

Ensure that the school counseling curriculum is completed and implemented, and provide professional development as needed by the department

Recommendation

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

This Collaborative Conference Report reflects the findings of the school's Self-Reflection and those of the visiting team. It provides a blueprint for the faculty, administrators, and other officials to use to improve the quality of programs and services for students in this school. The faculty, school board, and superintendent should be apprised by the building administrators yearly of progress made in aligning with the Standards for Accreditation.

The Commission expects school officials to use the results of the Collaborative Conference Report as well as the school's identified Priority Areas for Growth to draft a school improvement/growth plan, and to review and implement the findings of the Self-Reflection and Collaborative Conference Report. An outline of the next steps in the Accreditation process is included in the Commission's Accreditation Handbook, which is available on the Commission's website.

A school's initial/continued Accreditation is based on satisfactory progress implementing the school's improvement/growth plan based on the Priority Areas validated by the visiting team and recommendations identified by the Commission as it monitors the school's progress and changes which occur at the school throughout the decennial cycle. The school will complete a Summary Report and host a Decennial Accreditation visiting team two years after the Collaborative Conference to show progress implementing the school's Priority Areas. The Decennial visiting team will identify recommended next steps as well as additional recommendations for the school to continue to align with the Standards for Accreditation and to improve outcomes for students.

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Commission has an established Substantive Change Policy requiring that principals of member schools report to the Commission within sixty days of occurrence any substantive change which impacts the school's alignment with the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The Report of Substantive Change must describe the change itself and detail the impact(s) the change has had on the school's ability to align with 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 Reports of Planning and Progress and/or the Annual Information Report (AIR) which is required of each member school to ensure that the Commission office has current statistical data on the school.

The visiting team would like to express thanks to the community for the hospitality and welcome. The school community completed a Self-Reflection that clearly identified the school's strengths and areas of need. The time and effort dedicated to the Self-Reflection and preparation for the visit ensured a successful Collaborative Conference visit.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES Commission on Public Schools

Principals of member schools must report to the Commission within sixty days of occurrence any substantive change in the school which has an impact on the school's ability to meet any of the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The Report of 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