

New England Association of School and Colleges, Inc.

Commission on Public Schools



Committee on Public Secondary Schools

School Summary Report for Robert E. Fitch High School

Groton, CT

12-04-2022 - 12-07-2022

Edward Keleher, Principal

School and Community Summary

School and Community Summary

Robert E. Fitch Senior High School is located in the town of Groton, CT. Midway between New York and Boston, Groton is the largest municipality between New Haven, Connecticut, and the cities surrounding Providence, Rhode Island. According to data from the state of CT, the population of the town is 40,236. Groton is the home of the US Naval Submarine Base, the Global Research and Development campus of Pfizer, Inc., and the submarine construction facilities of the Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics, Inc. Other industries include tourism, traditional fishing, and advanced medical supply manufacturing. The University of Connecticut Marine Sciences center at Avery Point, with its related enterprises, gives Groton a unique place among science and learning centers. According to the state data, the median income is just over \$64,000 per year, with 37 percent of residents holding a Bachelor's degree. The poverty rate in town, 9.1 percent, is more than 1 point lower than the state average.

Groton Public Schools is a diverse, educational community of teachers and learners; educators, students, and staff. Our neighborhood schools, themed intra-district magnet schools, and award-winning high school serve over 4,400 students from across Groton, Connecticut. The district consists of six PK-5 elementary schools, one 6-8 middle school (this reflects the consolidation from 2 middle schools at the start of the 2020-2021 school year, and one 9-12 high school. The new middle school and high school are located on the same campus. Groton students have an option of choosing a state technical high school located in Groton and several parochial schools and magnet schools in the area. Current enrollment data suggests a downward trend over the past four years. District enrollment in mid-September 2020 shows total numbers at 4088 for all schools and 1025 students for Fitch High School.

The average cost of expenditure per pupil is \$16,393.22. In the FY 2019-2020, the proposed school budget is 62 percent of the town's general budget. Other monies contributing to the school budget include federal Impact Aid (4 percent), SPED Excess Cost (1 percent), Medicaid (0 percent), as well as state funding, ECS (32 percent). The total proposed budget for FY 2019-2020 is \$77,438,090.

The four-year graduation rate for 2018 was 83.7 percent. From the Class of 2019, 56.8 percent continued their education at four-year colleges, 15.6 percent continued their education at two-year colleges, 3.6 percent enrolled in a post-secondary training program, 6 percent enlisted into the military, and 8.6 percent entered into the workforce.

Robert E. Fitch High School is rich with academic options and opportunities for our student population. At Fitch High School, courses at the college level, the honors level, the Advanced Placement, or the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program or Diploma Program (DP) levels are available to all Fitch High School students. As an International Baccalaureate (IB) school, Fitch High School seeks to cultivate global citizens within each of our graduates. For this reason, Fitch High School incorporates the Middle Years Program in our 9th and 10th-grade levels. Students in the 11th and 12th grades can elect to enroll in any Advanced Placement (AP) classes, or students can take all required courses in the IB Diploma Program. Some students elect to enroll in classes within the Diploma Program and the Advanced Placement courses, simultaneously. Fitch High School has recently been authorized in the IB Career Program (CP) as well and is working to implement that program.

Fitch High School has partnerships with several local businesses, including Charter Oak Community Credit Union, which houses a high school branch. The Career Services office also regularly connects students to local jobs and internships. Additionally, students are part of credit-bearing dual enrollment programs, most notably with Three Rivers Community College and the University of Connecticut. The full Self Reflection report offers more detailed information about the connections between school and community.

Core Values, Beliefs, and Vision of the Graduate

Our mission at Robert E. Fitch High School is to educate our students to become outstanding global citizens equipped with 21st century learning skills. The faculty and staff collaborate with home and community to promote academic excellence, personal wellness, and social awareness. We guide our students into deeper cognitive awareness and increased levels of understanding, and we encourage our students to use their individual talents to their fullest potential. Our graduates are informed, responsible adults who respect diversity and value life-long learning.

The Vision of the Fitch Graduate... R I S E - Overview

THE THINKING BEHIND THE VISION: The Sentence Frame and Why We Have It

- THE SENTENCE FRAME: **The Fitch graduate demonstrates continuous commitment to...**
- WHY WE HAVE IT: We look at our Vision of the Graduate as a growth model. We meet the students where they are, and we support them as they RISE. The expectation is that they continue to grow throughout life.

The Vision of the Fitch Graduate...R I S E

R- Resilient Individual

The Fitch graduate demonstrates continuous commitment to personal growth and wellness by independently accepting challenges, engaging in hard work, and developing resilience to thrive as an individual.

I - Innovative Learner

The Fitch graduate demonstrates continuous commitment to intellectual growth in critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and knowledge across the disciplines.

S - Socially Aware Citizen

The Fitch graduate demonstrates continuous commitment to cultural understanding and interaction by actively promoting social awareness, civic responsibility, and dedication to the local and global community.

E - Engaged Communicator

The Fitch graduate demonstrates continuous commitment to effective and purposeful communication that exhibits open-mindedness, respectful collaboration, empathetic listening, and a clear, comprehensive presentation of ideas.

The Vision of the Graduate, Art Work

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_ajgVglyFgrskLlrlc1Lep4SZM4lsx-P/view?usp=sharing

Standards & Principles

Foundational Element 1.1a - Learning Culture

The school community provides a safe environment.

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENT 1.1A

The Fitch High School community provides a safe environment. Fitch has numerous mechanisms in place to provide a physically, emotionally, and socially safe environment for staff and students.

Fitch has eleven part time school security officers that are highly visible throughout the school. While they have assigned locations, they do patrol the halls and routinely check the school perimeter to ensure all outside doors are locked. Security officers have staggered hours which allow us to have coverage from 6:45am - 5:30pm. We are using the Raptor Visitor Management System to strengthen our program of campus safety for students and faculty. The safety of our students is our highest priority and the Raptor visitor management system allows us to quickly identify those that may present a danger to our students. Students are not allowed to have visitors in school during normal school hours except when granted special permission from a school administrator who has been given one full day's notice. Once permission has been granted all visitors must enter the school using the doors at the main lobby.

Visitor Access to Building

All doors are locked at all times. Visitors are expected to enter through the front doors. Visitors requesting entrance must ring the buzzer on the school's PA/Camera. Once the request for access has been validated, the Safety Officer will unlock the doors. Upon entering a district building, visitors will be asked to present an ID such as a Driver's License, which can either be scanned or manually entered into the raptor system. If a parent/guardian or contractor does not have a US government-issued ID, the school staff member can use any form of identification and manually enter the person's name into the Raptor system. The Raptor system will check to ensure that registered sexual offenders are not entering our school campuses without our knowledge. *Visitor badge may not be required for those who visit our schools simply to drop off an item in the office or pick up paperwork.*

More recently, our School Safety team received approval from our Superintendent to explore and implement an Emergency Response Flipbook for the entire district. We believe in the many positives this allows for all our students as it reduces the need for students to learn new safety/emergency practices and routines from grade to grade. Additionally, it allows for the district to be increasingly concise in emergency response and planning to ensure the safety of all students, staff, and any visitors.

We have a School Resource Officer assigned from the Groton Police Department. Our school campus is also conveniently located across the street from the police department. Our school performs monthly fire drills and lock down drills. We also employ classroom secure whenever there is an emergency with students and we wish to maintain confidentiality.

RATING

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 1.2a - Learning Culture

The school has a written document describing its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENT 1.2A

The school has a written document describing its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.

Core Values and Beliefs

Our mission at Robert E. Fitch High School is to educate our students to become outstanding global citizens equipped with 21st century learning skills. The faculty and staff collaborate with home and community to promote academic excellence, personal wellness, and social awareness. We guide our students into deeper cognitive awareness and increased levels of understanding, and we encourage our students to use their individual talents to their fullest potential. Our graduates are informed, responsible adults who respect diversity and value life-long learning.

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- The Fitch graduate demonstrates continuous commitment to personal growth and wellness by independently accepting challenges, engaging in hard work, and developing resilience to thrive as an individual.

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The Vision of the Graduate, Art Work

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_ajgVglyFgrskLlrlc1Lep4SZM4lsx-P/view?usp=sharing

RATING

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 2.2a - Student Learning

There is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments across the school.

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENT 2.2A Please write a brief explanation of how you are meeting this foundational element. This explanation can be cut and pasted from the Self-Reflection report, unless additional work has been done since the Collaborative Conference. Then mark whether you are *Meeting* or *Not Meeting* this element.

While we do have an area on the district website that curricula accessible to the public, the list is not comprehensive. This is one of our identified priority areas in which Assistant Superintendent Dr. Philip Piazza has been meeting with FHS Administration and Department Heads to gather existing curricula, determine which course curricula are missing and which curricula needs updating. District funding continues to be allocated for curriculum writing and progress continues to be made in this area. Currently we have approximately 75% of all curricula in hand and approximately 50% of it is in need of updates. We anticipate the majority of curricula writing to occur over Summer 2023 and we are in the process of identifying teachers interested in these positions. All departments are using this school year to incorporate the four pillars of the Vision of the Graduate into their curricula. In doing work in this priority area, we have identified the inconsistencies in curricula formatting between FHS created courses and IB's MYP courses. We are currently working to create a common format that will unite both FHS and MYP's curricula that highlights Vision of the Graduate.

In addition to curating all curricula, FHS is in the process of realigning its Program of Studies to better match the push towards College and Career Readiness. To address this issue, we have hired a Pathways Program Coordinator to take on the process. She has been working alongside FHS Administration and Department Heads to determine the best way to present the Program of Studies to students and families. She has done extensive outreach to other schools and districts in and out of state to see how information is being presented. She is currently in the process of creating a visual that will clearly outline the Pathway opportunities for students to add concentrations in their high school career.

To begin the Pathways process, we are identifying 4 main career clusters as they are considered areas of need in our local community: Manufacturing; Health Sciences; Human Services; and Arts Communication and Business. The state recognizes 12 career clusters, GPS has consolidated the clusters to 4 overarching clusters that incorporate specific pathways in these areas. Students will have the opportunity during course selection each year to align their coursework to their identified cluster and specific pathway. Students may also participate in clubs, activities and community events that will support and complement their career pathway. Local businesses provide internship, job shadowing and volunteer opportunities, as well for our students. We continue to expand and enhance these opportunities.

RATING

Does Not Meet the Standard

Foundational Element 3.1a - Professional Practices

The school has a current school improvement/growth plan.

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENT 3.1A Please write a brief explanation of how you are meeting this foundational element. This explanation can be cut and pasted from the Self-Reflection report, unless additional work has been done since the Collaborative Conference. Then mark whether you are *Meeting or Not Meeting* this element.

SELF REFLECTION REPORT:

The school is in the initiating phase of Principle 3.1. While the district has a Strategic Plan, the school currently does not have a growth plan. However, many of Fitch's current practices are consistent with the district plan even though a plan does not currently exist in writing.

Fitch High School's weekly Department Collaborative Time (DCT) plan is designed to promote a strategic mindset to provide common learning experiences for our students. The plan includes specific and measurable goals each week as reflected by DCT 5 Week Schedule: 1) develop and review meaningful common formative assessments (CFA), 2) IB Mid-Year Program (MYP) collaboration/common unit planning, 3) NEASC self-reflection, 4) Teacher to Teacher Professional Development, and 5) CFA analysis and action planning. This plan supports the district priorities as established in the Groton Public Schools Strategic Plan (GPSSP) 2017- 2022 to provide dynamic and rigorous instruction, ensure effective and engaging instruction, and foster an excellent learning environment. The DCT plan supports the five Standards for Accreditation, informs decision making regarding Common Learning Experiences and Common Assessments within the content areas, and reflects the school's core values, beliefs about learning to equip students with 21st century learning skills through the collaborative process.

The school community recently drafted the Vision of the Graduate. The collaborative process of developing the Vision of the Graduate started in the Spring of 2019. Work to be done includes integrating this Vision into the teaching and learning practices in the school, as well as considering the goals of the Vision and Core Values and Beliefs when drafting the school improvement plan. The survey data shows that 29% of the faculty indicated that they have helped in developing the School Improvement Plan (SIP). 34% of the faculty indicated that they are familiar with the SIP, and 36% indicated that they have a role in implementing the SIP. Fitch High School does not have a formal School Improvement Plan (SIP); however, we suspect that teachers indicated Totally True or Mostly True because of their active participation in the DCT plan.

A formal committee for School Improvement that involves all stakeholders is needed. Once this committee is in place, a SIP can be developed, communicated effectively, and include an evaluation and revision process with input from all stakeholders.

SINCE COLLABORATIVE REPORT:

FHS has begun the process of writing a SIP. In early November 2022, the document was shared with department heads to discuss with their department teachers. Each department is tasked with writing departmental mission statements and creating SMART goals that will address the promotion of RISE in their classes. We expect to have the Final SIP ready by end of this school year, and 100% full implementation in SY 2023-24.

RATING

Does Not Meet the Standard

Foundational Elements 4.1a - Learning Support

The school has intervention strategies designed to support learners.

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENT 4.1A Please write a brief explanation of how you are meeting this foundational element. This explanation can be cut and pasted from the Self-Reflection report, unless additional work has been done since the Collaborative Conference. Then mark whether you are *Meeting or Not Meeting* this element.

COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE REPORT:

Robert E. Fitch High School (FHS) has a wide variety of intervention strategies in place to support students. From Math and English intervention classes, to a referral system set by the school counseling department, the faculty actively works to place students in need of intervention and support them in its services.

Robert E. Fitch High School (FHS) is implementing Principle 4.1. There are a range of appropriate intervention strategies in place to support students' academic, social, and emotional success. The New Beginnings Alternative (NBA) Program is structured to meet the needs of our students who experience greater difficulty within the regular education classrooms. The program is staffed with an administrator, two certified special education teachers, and one psychologist; it also receives the support of behavioral specialists, as needed. Depending on the student's course schedule, many of our students in the NBA program attend the regular education classes in the mainstream whenever possible. While the NBA has its own classroom suite, dedicated professional and teaching staff and paraprofessionals, the regular education students at Fitch have a number of services in place for intervention strategies which involve regular education and special education teaching faculty, school counselors, other counseling services, and tutors.

Students in need of intervention may be referred to a Student Support Team (SST) which is comprised of a school counselor, a special education department chair, an administrator, and social worker/nurse/school psychologist as required. The SST is initiated via an ABC referral form. The SST utilizes the Student Intervention Worksheet to aid in discussions and recommendations for appropriate academic/emotional interventions to support students. In addition to the SST, the school has developed a course, The Academic Success Course (TASC) to support students' academic success. TASC is designed to foster academic independence and success. There are short lessons in each class period that are designed to develop successful habits across the disciplines. The class also has built-in time for student-teacher check-ins and independent work time. The Math and English Departments have intervention classes in place to support identified students and at-risk students in those subject areas. Students are recommended by teachers or identified through academic performance. Students in Math intervention use the APEX learning system along with close staff supervision to improve success in Math. In the English department, small intervention classes focus on skills to improve success in reading and writing. While the English department does offer skills-based lessons in the English Intervention course, there is currently no Reading Specialist on staff at Fitch for students reading below grade level. FHS also utilizes the APEX learning system to provide academic intervention and support. APEX provides an alternative to traditional classes and is also used for credit recovery. Students may choose to take APEX courses (with parental and administrative approval) or they may be recommended into the APEX program through the administration and counseling department. Students may also receive formal and informal counseling from school psychologists/social workers to address emotional concerns. Parental permission is required. The School Counseling department has developed a "Hot Pass" program as an accommodation to help alleviate social and emotional needs that may occur during the school day. Students issued a Hot Pass may excuse themselves from the classroom and proceed to a designated place as needed. FHS has a Homebound Tutoring program in place to meet the needs of students identified as requiring such a program. In order for a student to

be placed on homebound tutoring, there is a specific procedure and protocol that needs to take place between the student, parent, the student's school counselor, administrator, school nurse, and other medical personnel. The district then employs a tutor for a fixed amount of time while the student is out of school.

Four days a week, students attend CTL (Commitment to Learn). CTL is a half-hour period where students may complete homework/classwork, receive extra-help from a teacher, and make-up tests/quizzes. Students also access the Naviance program to receive on-line lessons to support their academic, social, and emotional success. For the most part, students are assigned to the same CTL teacher for four years providing the student with another adult to monitor and mentor them. A Crisis FlowChart, Mental Health Risk to Others/School, and Mental Health Risk to Self flowcharts have been developed and disseminated to staff to provide guidance on supporting students with potential mental health concerns.

FHS has an onsite School Based Health Center (SBHC) administered by the Child & Family Agency of Southeastern CT. In addition to health services students can obtain services such as group, individual and/or family therapy. SBHCs are licensed by the Department of Public Health and are staffed by Certified Nurse Practitioners and Masters-prepared Mental Health Clinicians.

An after school program, The Falcon Academy (now called FALCON RISE Academy), is in place to support students. This after school program is a peer- tutoring program with teacher supervision in order to provide students with additional academic support. Students may be recommended by a teacher or may choose on their own to attend Falcon Academy. Falcon Academy is also a service provided to athletes who may need tutoring to pass their courses and stay eligible to play sports.

A Peer Mediation program is in effect and is managed by the school social worker. FHS also has the Anonymous Alerts software set up to combat bullying and other negative activities in schools. Students may report bullying and safety issues quickly and anonymously. This provides another avenue to enhance social / emotional well-being/success. FHS has a room designated as the "Zen Room" located in the counseling suite where students may go during the day to sit in a quiet environment to relax and gather their thoughts. There are also numerous clubs/student organizations that support the academic, social, and emotional well-being of students.

Areas of potential improvement revolve around communication:

- Availability and types of intervention services offered by the school needs to be more readily publicized to students and families. (i.e. more links on the website, more mention in student handbook and elsewhere...)
- Students and the programs themselves would be better served with greater publicity, leading to greater potential access.
- Monitoring of students' progress and successes and/or setbacks needs to be more transparent, available, and communicated to relevant stakeholders.
- Communication is inconsistent after the initial identification meetings and referrals.

SINCE THE COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE:

Since the Collaborative Conference, the Student Study Teams, or SST, has been replaced with Scientific Research-Based Interventions, SRBI. These new teams are comprised of one assistant principal and one counselor. These teams coordinate with teachers, social workers, school psychologists and other staff when determining needed interventions. Each team is responsible for approximately 165 students. The teams meet every three weeks to identify the students in need of intervention. The teams create a plan of action to support these students. Possible supports might include:

- Contacting guardians to schedule weekly visits to Falcon Academy
- Coordinating with teachers to schedule support during CTL or afterschool
- Changing the student schedule to include TASC or an intervention class
- Utilizing tutors during CTL or having tutors push into classroom
- Connecting students with an SEL Tutor

The Falcon RISE Academy is an after-school opportunity for students to get tutoring from FHS teachers hired to support our students. The Falcon RISE Academy is run by two FHS teachers and supported by three other staff

members each day. This academy meets Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 2:30 - 3:30. In the past, the Academy met in the library. This location was not optimal as the library was also used by other students talking, gaming, waiting around for their sporting event or waiting for a ride home. We are now using three classrooms, each focusing on related subject matter: Math/ Science; English/ Social Studies; World Language/ CTE/ PE/ Health. In addition to our teacher tutors, we have students from the National Honor Society on hand that will tutor students. This activity will also help our NHS students to fulfill their annually required 30 volunteer service hours. Our student athletes are required to attend Falcon Academy if they have a D or F in any of their classes. The SRBI teams also contact families in order to invite their child to attend The Falcon RISE Academy. To monitor and track daily attendance in the Falcon RISE Academy, students "check in" each day by scanning a QR code that tracks data in a Google sheet. The collected attendance data is evaluated when SRBI Teams meet to evaluate student progress. A full-time reading specialist has been hired for English intervention and the department continues to use Lexia Pro as a means of identifying students in need of English support. Intervention courses are offered in both the English and Math departments. There is a section of the Freshman Academic Seminar course that is co-taught by an English teacher as well as the Reading Specialist. There is another Freshman Academic Seminar course that is supported with a math tutor. This allows students to get an even more intensive intervention experience. The school has also hired three Social Emotional Learning Tutors (SEL) to support the social emotional well-being of our diverse population. These tutors are strategically assigned to students who need an additional trusted adult to process through a variety of life situations. To support our ELL population, we have increased the number of full-time tutors for our English Language Learners from 3 to a total of 6. Teachers do not need to submit an ABC Referral form because their student has earned an F. The SRBI Teams will see these students when the reports are pulled. Teachers should submit ABC referral forms if 1) there is a sudden drop in performance, 2) they have social emotional concerns, 3) behavioral concerns, 4) personal concerns or 5) any other concerns (besides a failing grade). The referral form should then be shared with the counselor and respective administrator. For your reference, a copy of our *Interventions for Students* has been uploaded to this report.

RATING

Meets the Standard

Priority Area 1

PRIORITY AREA Please list your priority area goal.

All courses will have a complete curriculum in a unified format and that curriculum will be accessible on the district dashboard.

ACTION - IMPACT - GROWTH Please describe the actions you have taken to achieve your goal, the impact it has had on student learning or the school community, and your next steps or questions regarding this priority area.

ACTION:

Currently, the portion of curricula accessible by the public on our district website is not comprehensive. To address this priority area, our Assistant Superintendent has been meeting with FHS Administration and Department Heads to gather existing curricula, determine which course curricula are missing and which curricula needs updating. District funding continues to be allocated for curriculum writing and progress continues to be made in this area. Currently, we have approximately 75% of all curricula in hand, and approximately 50% in need of updates. We anticipate the majority of curricula writing to occur over Summer 2023 and we are in the process of identifying teachers interested in these positions. All departments are using this school year to incorporate the four pillars of the Vision of the Graduate into their daily lessons.

IMPACT:

By going through the process ensuring that all courses have a complete curriculum in a unified format has made Central Office, school administration and this steering committee aware how necessary this basic feature is to maintain a well-run school. Finding, updating and writing new curriculum guarantees that our students are being taught the most relevant, up-to-date information. This will ensure that learning outcomes are the same regardless of which instructor is teaching the course. With attrition of staff as retirements approach, having curricula presented in a unified manner will make certain that new staff pick up where former staff left off.

GROWTH:

During this process, we have identified the inconsistencies in curricula formatting between FHS created courses and FHS MYP (Middle Years Program) formatted courses. We are currently working to create a common format that will unite both FHS and MYP's curricula that highlights Vision of the Graduate.

During the Spring of 2022, the English department grade level teams met to audit their curriculum texts and to create pacing guides for units. This has allowed the teachers to more effectively ensure that students are receiving similar experiences in all classes. Over the summer, the social studies department also engaged in curriculum writing to update the documents for several of their courses. The Special Education department updated curriculum maps for specialized core content courses in the spring of 2022. World Language curriculum map updates were completed in the summer of 2022 using a hybrid MYP/Groton Public Schools format.

In addition to our Math and Science departments, a few of our AP humanities teachers are being trained by the National Math and Science Initiative, NMSI. While this initiative supports STEM, it also supports the AP classes that complement STEM. Our district realizes the importance that humanities have on our students and is financially supporting the training of these teachers through NMSI. It is our hope that this training will lead to an increase in AP enrollment and college and career readiness.

The Groton Public School's World Language Department is in the midst of tremendous endeavors. With the hiring of a World Language consultant, this endeavor directly impacts Fitch High School. The goals set for the

World --Language Department begin with the expansion of the language program through teacher workshops and teacher collaborations. The second goal is to revise and design a curriculum that aligns with our International Baccalaureate standards and the standards dictated by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. The third goal is to increase student enrollment in all World Language classes. Furthermore, the last goal is to increase the number of students receiving the Seal of Biliteracy in as many different languages as possible. To date, World Language teachers have participated in multiple workshops receiving training that will further enhance classroom instruction. As well, curriculum development has just begun creating classes for our Multi-language Learners. The Spanish4Spanish Speakers class will provide appropriate support for our students enrolling in our school from various Latino countries around the world.

We have also identified another initiative that will help grow our student successes. In November 2022, FHS started whole school training with *Equal Opportunity Schools* to help us ensure that curricula is being developed and implemented with equity in mind in an effort to increase historically underserved student populations into challenging courses. A survey went out to all students and staff that will result in a "report card" for each individual student, which will allow for future identification of students to be placed into higher level classes.

Groton Public Schools has been recently awarded two grants that are aimed at developing career pathways for K-12. These pathways will include career connected learning opportunities. Student internships will give our students a chance to experience industry work in their chosen career pathway and teacher externships will give our teacher the opportunities to meet with industry professionals to see what skills the workers of tomorrow will need. Our newly hired Career Coordinator has been working at forging relationships with industry and setting up meetings to establish these exciting new opportunities for our students and teachers. We look forward to affording our students and staff these opportunities as a way to practice employing RISE in everyday work.

EVIDENCE Please upload, link, or explain any evidence that you examined to determine growth in this priority area.

Attached below are documents that support our current efforts to enhance student opportunities as we implement the Vision of the Graduate. This includes documents that demonstrate partnerships that have been created for learning opportunities such as field trips, hosting guest speakers, as well as job shadowing and potential student internships.

Documents also show a move towards updating curriculum and the current program of studies to reflect RISE, the Vision of the Graduate. A lesson plan has also been provided from our Freshman Seminar class which incorporates RISE.

Related Files

- [2022 11 04-07 58 Copy of Grade Twelve Curriculum Map.pdf](#)
- [2022 11 04-07 59 Copy of Grade Nine Curriculum Map.pdf](#)
- [2022 11 07-10 06 GNACC Manufacturing.Healthcare Expo Student Outline 1.pdf](#)
- [2022 11 07-10 11 Copy of Grade 10 SS United States History curriculum DRAFT 1.pdf](#)
- [2022 11 07-10 11 EBandYMPI.pdf](#)
- [2022 11 07-10 41 FAS What will my future cost .pdf](#)
- [2022 11 07-11 13 VisionoftheGraduateArt.jpeg](#)
- [2022 11 14-16 09 CP Authorization Letter.pdf](#)

Priority Area 2

PRIORITY AREA Please list your priority area goal.

The school will implement a formal SRBI process which includes methods to identify, track, and evaluate student progress.

ACTION - IMPACT - GROWTH Please describe the actions you have taken to achieve your goal, the impact it has had on student learning or the school community, and your next steps or questions regarding this priority area.

ACTION:

Since the Collaborative Conference, the Student Study Teams, or SST, has been replaced with Scientific Research-Based Interventions, SRBI. These new teams are comprised of one assistant principal and one counselor. Each team is responsible for approximately 165 students. The teams will meet every three weeks to identify the students in need of intervention. The teams will create a plan of action to support these students.

In support of our identified students, we are relaunching the Falcon RISE Academy. This is an after-school opportunity for students to get tutoring from FHS teachers hired to support our students. The RISE Academy, run by two FHS teachers, meets Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 2:30 - 3:30. In the past, the Academy met in the library. This location was not optimal as the library was also used by other students talking, gaming, waiting around for their sporting event or waiting for a ride home. We are now using three classrooms, each focusing on related subject matter: Math/ Science; English/ Social Studies; World Language/ CTE/ PE/ Health. In addition to our teacher tutors, we have students from the National Honor Society on hand that will tutor students. This activity will also help our NHS students to fulfill their annually required 30 volunteer service hours. To monitor and track daily attendance in the Falcon RISE Academy, students will "check in" each day by scanning a QR code that tracks data in a Google sheet. The collected attendance data is evaluated when SRBI Teams meet to evaluate student progress.

A full-time reading specialist has been hired for English intervention and the department continues to use Lexia Rapid has a means of identifying students in need of English support. Intervention courses are offered in both the English and Math departments, although at this time there is no specific Math Interventionist position. There is a section of the Freshman Academic Seminar course that is co-taught by an English teacher as well as the Reading Specialist. Prior to the grade 9 year, multiple points of data are used to enroll students in intervention classes in math and reading during their 9th grade year. This allows students to get an even more intensive intervention experience. The Math department, when able to, tries to follow a similar model but does not have a specific Math Interventionist/Specialist. The school has also hired three SEL tutors and increased the number of full-time tutors for our English Language Learners to four. We are currently working on identifying new universal screeners for both mathematics and reading.

IMPACT:

While we encourage all of our students to take advantage of the Falcon RISE Academy, we have seen an impact among our student athletes. Our sports coaches routinely check grades, remind athletes to attend the RISE Academy and work closely with the SRBI teams. While CIAC rules require a minimum of 4 credits to be earned the previous year, FHS requires the successful completion of 5 credits. Athletes that have a D or F in one class, must attend Falcon RISE Academy for a minimum of one session per week. Athletes with more than one D or F must attend a minimum of two sessions per week. These requirements are having a positive impact on our sports teams' overall grades. As the program continues to grow, data will be available for progress monitoring. We are working towards encouraging all athletes to make use of the time in Falcon RISE Academy to complete

daily assignments, check in with tutors and learn to budget their time for future assignments. We want to encourage our students to work hard on the field and in the classroom.

GROWTH:

We have identified an opportunity to help our coaches continue to support our student athletes. Weekly attendance records from Falcon RISE Academy will be shared with the coaches along with any comments. We also envision sharing attendance records with our teachers via Google drive to report up to date progress being made by all students attending Falcon RISE Academy.

We have seen the benefit of having a full time English interventionist on hand to work one-on-one with students and offer teachers advice and hope to implement a similar model in mathematics.

EVIDENCE Please upload, link, or explain any evidence that you examined to determine growth in this priority area.

Attached are the documents currently being used for our SRBI process. Please note that attendance will now be tracked through QR codes.

The ABC referral form is a means for teachers to start a referral process for students that might be in need of support aside from academics.

The Interventions for Students documents the SRBI process and planned interventions for students.

Related Files

- [2022 11 04-08 10 Copy of 2022 - 2023 ABC Referral Form.pdf](#)
- [2022 11 04-08 12 Copy of Interventions for Students.pdf](#)

Priority Area 3

PRIORITY AREA Please list your priority area goal.

The school will develop a common school wide focus based on the district improvement plan and Vision of the Graduate.

ACTION - IMPACT - GROWTH Please describe the actions you have taken to achieve your goal, the impact it has had on student learning or the school community, and your next steps or questions regarding this priority area.

ACTION:

- The school-wide work that was initiated last year on the Vision of the Graduate has been developed and is being shared with departments so that they may incorporate our identified R.I.S.E attributes into daily lessons.
- A process will be designed to reflect student achievement of R.I.S.E, the Vision of the Graduate.
- A Fitch High School Improvement Plan (SIP) is in process of being developed. The School Improvement Plan is based upon the Vision of the Graduate and will incorporate goals from every department related to R.I.S.E.
- Realigning Career Pathways to help support the Vision of the Graduate
- Developing a system of Instructional Rounds to monitor the use of R.I.S.E instructional strategies.

IMPACT:

After developing our Vision of the Graduate, the FHS faculty worked together to identify instructional strategies that focused on each of the attributes of the VoG. The faculty is starting to implement the use of those strategies in the classroom to support the Vision of the Graduate in every class, every day, with every student. This will ensure that the Vision of the Graduate is supported by every teacher.

GROWTH:

- Each department will select an element of R.I.S.E. to implement into their teaching practice.
- Develop school wide process that reflects the use of R.I.S.E. and the vision of the graduate in the classroom. Ideally this vision will be shared and extended down to the elementary and middle schools.

EVIDENCE Please upload, link, or explain any evidence that you examined to determine growth in this priority area.

Attached is the document that explains the Vision of the Graduate and the breakdown of the information that was used to develop it.

Below is a link that is used at our freshman orientation to introduce R.I.S.E.

[Freshmen Orientation - August 24, 2022 - Details - Kahoot!](#)

Related Files

- [2022 11 04-08 28 Copy of MARCH PD NEASC Vision of the Graduate .pdf](#)

Principle Rating Changes

Please list any principles that you feel may have changed ratings on the Principles of Effective Practice Rubric since the Collaborative Conference based on your work in your priority areas or other areas of the school. List each principle with a very brief explanation of the work that has been done.

PRINCIPLE

Standard 1 Principle 7

RATING AT COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE

Developing

RATING AT DECENNIAL

Implementing

EXPLANATION

COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE REPORT:

The school culture works towards fostering civic engagement and social and personal responsibility. Fitch has taken steps to address these areas and there are numerous programs and policies in place to encourage a culture focused on civic engagement and social and personal responsibility; however, evidence suggests more work needs to be done before this standard can be completely met.

In the 2022 NEASC CPS Opinion Surveys, 95% of parent respondents indicated that their child was taught to take responsibility for their actions. In the student responses to the same question, 88% of students reported that they take responsibility for their actions.

Fitch has many ways for students to get involved with civic engagement and social issues, and it continues to try to foster student engagement in its existing opportunities for civic and social involvement. Many opportunities exist with a wide variety of both service clubs and social awareness clubs. Among the service clubs are Key Club, Keyettes, Humanitarian Club, and Random Acts of Kindness Club. Fitch clubs participate in charity work and also sponsor Start with Hello Week each fall in conjunction with the Sandy Hook Promise. Athletic teams and class groups also volunteer for Read Across America week in the district elementary schools. Numerous clubs exist to focus on various social issues, such as Spectrum (Gay Straight Alliance), the Renaissance Club, More Than Words, and the Black Student Union. Two of those clubs, More Than Words and BSU recently presented to the faculty at a staff meeting. In that meeting, it was apparent that many students of color do not feel heard nor accepted in this school. Faculty and students seem committed to working on this issue as evidence does show there is room for improvement. Additionally, while there are abundant opportunities to stay socially and civically involved, there is a concern that not enough students are involved or that the same segment of students are

involved.

Further, while the National Honor Society and the IB Diploma Program require its members to complete community service hours and/or projects [IB has the Community, Activity, Service (CAS) project], these are not a school-wide requirements for graduation. This results in only a portion of students actively pursuing documented community service opportunities. This is evident in the 2022 NEASC CPS Opinion Surveys, where only 58% of students indicated they make contributions to the community. A number of students are active in faith-based and community organizations outside of school affiliation; however, these are not documented by the school.

While about two thirds of students indicate they are learning about current social issues (via 2022 NEASC CPS Opinion Surveys) and many students would tell you that they are taking responsibility for their actions, Fitch High School still has work to do as it develops stronger capacity in Standard 1.7.

SINCE THE COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE:

A Career Pathways Coordinator was hired this year to forge relationships in our community and coordinate partnerships with industry. We plan on offering internships to students so that they may experience first-hand their chosen career pathway, and externships to teachers so they may better understand the link between high school and industry. We have also joined forces with EWIB, the Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board, who works with area educators, trainers, and employers to prepare a supply of qualified workers. EWIB has relationships with ~50 manufacturing companies in Eastern CT and is extending invitations so that we may continue connecting with industry leaders. EWIB has introduced us to the YMPI, Youth Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative, which is curriculum that prepares individuals for entry-level jobs in manufacturing. The Coordinator has also been getting actively involved with the local Chambers of Commerce (Norwich, Mystic) to forge more civic and community relationships. This information has already proven useful as evidenced in the form of field trips for students, guest speakers to FHS, and a heightened interest in Manufacturing from our students.

Our College & Career Counselor continues to run workshops for our students with topics such as FAFSA and College Panels, aligning our students with mentors from General Dynamic Electric Boat, our local submarine manufacturer; hosts trips to Career Fairs such as the one at Mohegan Sun that is highlighting HBCUs. Our counselor also works closely with our Navy Liaison to answer questions about enlistment and ASVAB testing. In addition, our counselor also posts all local volunteer opportunities to a physical bulletin board as well as a virtual board which she links to her weekly letter to students, families and staff.

This year, FHS has made a big push in increasing enrollment in the over 60 clubs, sports and additional extracurricular activities. Our goal is to include all of our students in some type of club, service learning, and/or community service opportunity.

PRINCIPLE

Standard 2 Principle 1

RATING AT COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE

Developing

RATING AT DECENNIAL

EXPLANATION

COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE REPORT:

Robert E. Fitch High School is in the developing phase of Principle 2.1. The NEASC Student Survey Report indicated that 39% of students felt that there was a clear vision about the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in life. The school is in the process of developing a Vision of the Graduate that includes both a statement outlining the qualities of a Fitch graduate and a visual representation of those qualities. The NEASC Co-Coordinator met with community stakeholders in July 2019 and conducted an activity with community leaders to brainstorm details for the Vision of the Graduate. The same activity was then initiated with the faculty at the beginning of the school year. Then a Vision of the Graduate was drafted and presented to the Self Reflection Committee. Next, the draft was presented to the Administrative Team and Department Heads. After that, a group of student artists were invited to collaborate on the Vision of the Graduate artwork. Student artists worked through multiple versions and drafts to finalize the visual representation of the Vision of the Graduate. The artwork was created, vetted, and presented to the faculty and the Board of Education for review. During the November 2019 faculty meeting, the faculty reviewed and approved the design. Consequently, the school agreed to adopt the proposed Vision of the Graduate.

R- Resilient Individual The Fitch graduate demonstrates continuous commitment to personal growth and wellness by independently accepting challenges, engaging in hard work, and developing resilience to thrive as an individual.

I - Innovative Learner The Fitch graduate demonstrates continuous commitment to intellectual growth in critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and knowledge across the disciplines.

S - Socially Aware Citizen The Fitch graduate demonstrates continuous commitment to cultural understanding and interaction by actively promoting social awareness, civic responsibility, and dedication to the local and global community.

E - Engaged Communicator The Fitch graduate demonstrates continuous commitment to effective and purposeful communication that exhibits open-mindedness, respectful collaboration, empathetic listening, and a clear, comprehensive presentation of ideas.

SINCE COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE REPORT:

After the initial Vision of the Graduate was identified as R.I.S.E, a team of teachers organized professional development workshops around determining the best ways to implement the Vision of the Graduate. The process included departments identifying what they already were doing that aligned with RISE. From there, they examined the evidence to look for common threads and practices and created a comprehensive chart that organized all this information. Departments then connected what they are already doing in their teaching practices. The next step in this process is for each department to create a goal linked to the RISE Vision of the Graduate, as well as incorporating the instructional strategies linked to each RISE attribute. The idea behind this is that anyone stopping by a classroom will be able to see the Vision of the Graduate in practice.

We have also begun to market this school wide initiative through the use of banners hung throughout the building; and stickers which we have been handed out to teachers during a staff meeting where our RISE committee led PD and shared progress made. Additionally, students were given stickers during Freshmen Orientation. Staff members each received a black t-shirt with "FHS" printed on the front and "RISE" printed on the back.

Students learned about R.I.S.E at the beginning of the year both through freshman orientation and full class meetings. Parents have been introduced to R.I.S.E through parent newsletters sent out by the Principal.

To support the student understanding of our Vision of the Graduate, we are incorporating monthly CTL/SEL lessons that reflect each attribute. The outline for these lessons can be viewed here - <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qFm0BLBwY4Q0nrkBvqZyB31yD43Uha5MI5bihgmxb4w/edit>

PRINCIPLE

Standard 2 Principle 2

RATING AT COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE

Developing

RATING AT DECENNIAL

Implementing

EXPLANATION

COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE REPORT:

Robert E. Fitch High School is in the developing phase for Principle 2.2. There is not 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. The district has a Curriculum Map template of written curriculum; however, not all content areas are using the template at the present time. The common curriculum map includes units of study with key content, concepts connecting it to a level of higher order thinking (Bloom's Taxonomy). Common assured learning experiences along with common unit assessments are included to ensure disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge. Each course has essential questions stemming from Big Ideas. There is a formal process in place during monthly department meetings to develop common formative assessments within disciplines. The district is in the process of uploading all curriculum to the school website for easy parent, teacher and student access. Currently, the English Department is the only discipline with a current, consistent, uploaded curriculum. However, many departments, such as Math, Science, and Social Studies that are lack completed curriculum and require district resources and support in order to achieve this. There is a curriculum revision timeline pending funding and recommendations from stakeholders.

SINCE THE COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE:

Currently, the portion of curricula accessible by the public on our district website is not comprehensive. To address this priority area, our Assistant Superintendent has been meeting with FHS Administration and Department Heads to gather existing curricula, determine which course curricula are missing and which curricula needs updating. District funding continues to be allocated for curriculum writing and progress continues to be made in this area. Currently, we have approximately 75% of all curricula in hand, and approximately 50% in need of updates. We anticipate the majority of curricula writing to occur over Summer 2023 and we are in the process of identifying teachers interested in these positions. All departments are using this school year to incorporate the four pillars of the Vision of the Graduate into their daily lessons.

Finding, updating and writing new curriculum guarantees that our students are being taught the most relevant, up-to-date information. This will ensure that learning outcomes are the same regardless of which instructor is teaching the course. Having curricula presented in a unified manner will make certain that new staff pick up where former staff left off.

During this process, we have identified the inconsistencies in curricula formatting between FHS created courses and FHS MYP (Middle Years Program) formatted courses. We are currently working to create a common format that will unite both FHS and MYP's curricula that highlights Vision of the Graduate.

During the Spring of 2022, the English department grade level teams met to audit their curriculum texts and to create pacing guides for units. This has allowed the teachers to more effectively ensure that students are receiving similar experiences in all classes. Over the summer, the social studies department also engaged in curriculum writing to update the documents for several of their courses. The Special Education department updated curriculum maps for specialized core content courses in the spring of 2022. World Language curriculum map updates were completed in the summer of 2022 using a hybrid MYP/Groton Public Schools format.

In addition to our Math and Science departments, a few of our AP humanities teachers are being trained by the National Math and Science Initiative, NMSI. While this initiative supports STEM, it also supports the AP classes that complement STEM. Our district realizes the importance that humanities have on our students and is financially supporting the training of these teachers through NMSI. It is our hope that this training will lead to an increase in AP enrollment and college and career readiness.

We have also identified another initiative that will help grow our student successes. In November 2022, FHS started whole school training with *Equal Opportunity Schools* to help us ensure that curricula is being developed and implemented with equity in mind in an effort to increase historically underserved student populations into challenging courses. A survey went out to all students and staff that will result in a "report card" for each individual student, which will allow for future identification of students to be placed into higher level classes.

Groton Public Schools has been recently awarded two grants that are aimed at developing career pathways for K-12. These pathways will include career connected learning opportunities. Student internships will give our students a chance to experience industry work in their chosen career pathway and teacher externships will give our teacher the opportunities to meet with industry professionals to see what skills the workers of tomorrow will need. Our newly hired Career Coordinator has been working at forging relationships with industry and setting up meetings to establish these exciting new opportunities for our students and teachers. We look forward to affording our students and staff these opportunities as a way to practice employing RISE in everyday work.

As an International Baccalaureate school, Fitch High School has incorporated the philosophy within the culture of our school. While the Middle Years Program supports our 9th and 10th-grade students, the Diploma Program supports our 11th and 12th-grade students. Fitch High School teachers receive ongoing training that improves classroom instruction and implementation of unit planners. Fitch High School's Middle Years Coordinator works directly with each academic department of teachers to ensure that unit planners are complete and are implemented with fidelity in the classrooms.

Groton Public School's World Language Department is in the midst of tremendous endeavors. With the hiring of a World Language consultant, this work has directly impacts Fitch High School. The goals set for the World --Language Department begin with the expansion of the language program through teacher workshops and teacher collaborations. The second goal is to revise and design a curriculum that aligns with our International Baccalaureate standards and the standards dictated by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. The third goal is to increase student enrollment in all World Language classes. The last goal is to increase the number of students receiving the Seal of Biliteracy in as many different languages as possible.

PRINCIPLE

RATING AT COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE

Developing

RATING AT DECENNIAL

Implementing

EXPLANATION

COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE REPORT:

Robert E. Fitch High School is developing Principle 2.4. Twenty-four percent of parents surveyed state that their child's teachers have asked how their child learns best. On the other hand, when surveyed, 67% of faculty feel that they know how their students learn best.

With this in mind, Common Formative Assessments are often used to adjust instruction in the classroom. For example, the September CFA in all English classes assisted teachers in determining initial strengths and weaknesses of students in their writing - particularly for identifying and analyzing the author's purpose. Additionally, evidence for using this specific CFA, is in the English department "Differentiated Plan". Based on the analysis of the September CFA, purposeful grouping is utilized for scaffolding purposes in their "irony scavenger hunt" activity. This allowed for tiered intervention in order to broaden perspectives and allow students in need to feel empowered to advocate for assistance. In Math Intervention classes, a daily checklist is used to assist in further guiding students while giving them the tools to accomplish the tasks at hand independently.

World Language teachers also created tiered vocabulary study activities based on their assessment of students current skill level. In level one Spanish, students review their family vocabulary in an activity that is leveled towards their capacity with that key concept. The CFA administered for the Advanced Placement U.S. History course assessed students' ability to respond to stimulus-based questions. The data collected and analyzed determined that students required a re-teaching in learning how to respond to these types of questions.

Faculty are given the opportunity to collaborate with others regarding instructional practices designed to meet the needs of all students weekly during Department Collaborative Time (DCT) and Teaching and Learning Initiative (TLI) days as well as five professional development days.

SINCE THE COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE:

Pre-COVID, teachers were given time to connect during weekly Department Collaborative Time (DCT). DCT time was eliminated at the end of the 2019-2020 school year. In place of DCT a plan was implemented where departmental meetings were held during CTL (Commitment to Learning). Teachers were paired together and based on a rotating schedule would supervise the other teacher's group allowing for time to meet with their respective department twice each month. Unfortunately, as numbers of COVID infections spiked once again during the winter of 2021-22, this practice was halted as it meant too many people in a room at a time. Also, CTL time has been reduced in an effort to accommodate the new required longer lunch period per the State of CT.

Currently, the only time that teachers have the ability to collaborate with department teachers is during Teaching and Learning Initiative (TLI) days which is only 3 hours each month, and other full Professional Development days. There is no time for teachers to collaborate with their colleagues outside of their department unless they have common planning time, meet during their lunch, or meet outside of contracted working hours. Core subject

areas (Math, English, Social Studies) have a common planning time every other day.

Finally, due to COVID, CFA's were put on hold temporarily. Departments began to reimplement them last year and are continuing to do so this year.

PRINCIPLE

Standard 3 Principle 1

RATING AT COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE

Initiating

RATING AT DECENNIAL

Developing

EXPLANATION

COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE REPORT:

The school is in the initiating phase of Principle 3.1. While the district has a Strategic Plan, the school currently does not have a growth plan. However, many of Fitch's current practices are consistent with the district plan even though a plan does not currently exist in writing.

Fitch High School's weekly Department Collaborative Time (DCT) plan is designed to promote a strategic mindset to provide common learning experiences for our students. The plan includes specific and measurable goals each week as reflected by DCT 5 Week Schedule: 1) develop and review meaningful common formative assessments (CFA), 2) IB Mid-Year Program (MYP) collaboration/common unit planning, 3) NEASC self-reflection, 4) Teacher to Teacher Professional Development, and 5) CFA analysis and action planning. This plan supports the district priorities as established in the Groton Public Schools Strategic Plan (GPSSP) 2017- 2022 to provide dynamic and rigorous instruction, ensure effective and engaging instruction, and foster an excellent learning environment. The DCT plan supports the five Standards for Accreditation, informs decision making regarding Common Learning Experiences and Common Assessments within the content areas, and reflects the school's core values, about learning to equip students with 21st century learning skills through the collaborative process.

The school community recently drafted the Vision of the Graduate. The collaborative process of developing the Vision of the Graduate started in the Spring of 2019. Work to be done includes integrating this Vision into the teaching and learning practices in the school, as well as considering the goals of the Vision and Core Values and Beliefs when drafting the school improvement plan.

The survey data shows that 29% of the faculty indicated that they have helped in developing the School Improvement Plan (SIP). 34% of the faculty indicated that they are familiar with the SIP, and 36% indicated that

they have a role in implementing the SIP. Fitch High School does not have a formal School Improvement Plan (SIP); however, we suspect that teachers indicated Totally True or Mostly True because of their active participation in the DCT plan.

A formal committee for School Improvement that involves all stakeholders is needed. Once this committee is in place, a SIP can be developed, communicated effectively, and include an evaluation and revision process with input from all stakeholders.

SINCE THE COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE:

Since the collaborative conference, the Vision of the Graduate has been developed under the acronym R.I.S.E and is being implemented in a variety of ways. Additionally, a draft of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) is being developed and departments have been tasked with contributing to it over the next several weeks. It will be ready for full implementation for the 2023-2024 school year.

Principle Rating Changes Additional (if needed)

Please list any principles that you feel may have changed ratings on the Principles of Effective Practice Rubric since the Collaborative Conference based on your work in your priority areas or other areas of the school. List each principle with a very brief explanation of the work that has been done.

PRINCIPLE

Standard 3 Principle 6

RATING AT COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE

Implementing

RATING AT DECENNIAL

Developing

EXPLANATION

The school is developing Principle 3.6. There are several productive student, family, community, and higher education partnerships that support learning. The culinary program provides food services to the community and teachers through the Falcon Café. Furthermore, the culinary students periodically compete in regional competitions and visit chefs for lessons in local restaurants. In addition, the District/School was awarded a Farm to School grant program and is in the process of designing and building a greenhouse to support environmental sustainability. The science department cultivates a long standing partnership with UConn's Project Oceanology program with students in multiple classes engaging in their lessons at the Avery Point Campus throughout the school year. The Children's Literature classes foster literacy partnerships with different elementary school buddies in the district. Similarly, the Computer Programming classes visit elementary schools for coding workshops. The photography classes have a partnership with the Mystic Seaport Education and Resource department. Twice a year the Photo 2 students use their facility and learn about the History of Photography. The Certified Nursing Assistant Program allows health professional students to go out into the community to practice what they have learned within the classroom. Every week, these student CNAs work in a local nursing home gaining valuable experiences in geriatric care. For the clubs and activities there are over 60 clubs, sports and arts/humanities organizations within the school to include, Robotics Booster Club, Veterans Committee, Key Club.

Educators work alongside the students to help them in fostering strong community ties within the school and the district in several partnerships. Students volunteer for freshman orientation at a two-day event to support incoming freshman students. Additionally, students volunteer throughout the year in support of Fitch athletics (Groton Food Locker), Fitch music (a cabaret/small ensemble dinner), district literacy (visiting elementary schools during Read Across America week), and graduation (serving as ushers and greeters). To support the arts and humanities, Fitch has an award-winning literary magazine, Amphora, which provides a vehicle through which

students can share their creativity with the school community. Amphora sponsors student writers in contests throughout the year as well as participates in the Eugene O'Neill Young Playwright's Contest annually. The music and art departments participate in several school wide and community events, including the annual Celebrate the Arts Festival at Northeast Academy Elementary School as well as sponsoring charitable projects like the Empty Bowls project. To support the students and help the community the Keyettes club which helps the Red Cross run two blood drives a year at Fitch, and they raise money for St. Jude's Children's Hospital through fundraisers. The Spectrum Club (formally the GSA) works to create safe spaces for LGBTQ+ students and allies. The Black Student Union and the Humanitarian clubs are instrumental in developing more social and global awareness. Additionally, the Renaissance Crew works to increase positive school climate and culture through respect, recognition, reward, and reinforcement in order to see results in our school. The Robotics Team also engages in community outreach at the local public library during school vacation weeks.

Parents are involved in parent teacher nights throughout the school year as well as in specialized evenings for school counseling and athletics. Parents have access to PowerSchool and Schoology to monitor students' grades throughout the school year. Parents/Guardians and students are invited to the FAFSA night within the school to explore options for attending college. Some students take not only Advanced Placement Courses and examinations but can take the UConn Early College Experience (ECE) courses within the school. Students can explore and reflect on real life financial decisions such as credit, debit, checking, and budgeting by working in the Charter Oak Branch office within the school.

While there are many existing partnerships which have flourished, Fitch could do more to bring in additional local professionals from a variety of fields, work with more community and local businesses, and local colleges. As the building transitions to expand the International Baccalaureate's Middle Years Program (MYP) and the Career PathWay Program, there are many ways in which to create new and lasting partnerships across the community.

Fitch can also work to create more parental/guardian engagement, even though they are invited to many activities, the school would like to increase its attendance at these events. We need a process to include more family and community members to attend and support these activities at our school.

Survey results indicate on several items that teachers work to engage parents in strong partnerships (questions 81-83), their survey also indicates that there is room for improvement to engage all students in community partnerships (item 80). Contrastingly, 45% of parents feel that the school engages them as a partner in learning and 41% witness opportunities for students to engage with community partners. From both sets of results, it is clear that there is room for growth in this area.

SINCE COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE:

As a result of COVID the majority of these programs that had been put on hold but are now being reinstated. Students in the Certified Nursing Assistant program are back out doing visits in area nursing homes, the Children's Literature course has re-established a partnership with one of our elementary schools, and students are able to once again work in the bank on campus as part of our Personal Finance program. Additionally, with the hiring of our Career Pathways Coordinator, partnerships with community organizations and local businesses are being established.

During COVID our wood and metal working shop was not in use. We are working on reopening that area for student use, and developing our programs to offer students more opportunities in manufacturing. This will include fully joining the Eastern Connecticut Manufacturing Pipeline to give students greater opportunities in manufacturing career opportunities, especially in the Groton area.

PRINCIPLE

Standard 5 Principle 1

RATING AT COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE

Developing

RATING AT DECENNIAL

Implementing

EXPLANATION

In certain aspects, the community and district provide sufficient school buildings and facilities which support the delivery of high-quality curriculum, programs, and services; however, there is a big discrepancy when it comes to certain areas of the building. Though the building renovation was completed in 2006 to add a whole new academic wing, other areas of the building have not been brought up to par with the newer section and additionally, several areas on campus (and outside as well), have not been maintained to support high quality curriculum, programs, and services. Because certain areas are supported (implementing) and other areas are not (initiating), this narrative will end with the rating developing.

Fitch High School ensures a safe, secure, and healthy environment for our students in order to support the diversity of the student body. 76% of the faculty agree that the building and grounds support learning; while 65% of the students agree on this as well. The school has emergency plans in place (in evidence, district Emergency Plans), and both students and faculty feel they know what to do in the case of a crisis or emergency (survey results). For example, Groton Public Schools has an emergency plan that must be adhered to by all schools within the district. Lockdown Drill plans are in place and have been rehearsed in the event of suspicious activity as being reported. Fire Drills are regularly rehearsed as by state law. Fitch High School has formed a Response Team to address in-school crisis events. Trained staff members are ready to respond when a warning over the loudspeaker announcement has been made by an administrator or staff member.

All entrances to the building and classrooms remain locked per school protocol. After being buzzed into the school building, all visitors are required to sign in at the security desk. Security staff, then, contacts the staff or faculty member notifying of the visitor's arrival. Visitors entering the building for a meeting will submit their driver's license to the security officer. They are given a Fitch High School badge identifying them as a visitor within the building before being shown their meeting room. Parents or guardians entering the building to pick up their student, also, sign in at the security desk before being directed to the Main Office. The school receptionist, then, verifies the parent or guardians identification by comparing driver's license identification with the information stored in PowerSchool contacts. All faculty and staff members are required to have their Groton Public School badge on their person, at all times. As an additional layer of security, Fitch High School retains a school resource officer who consistently roams the building throughout the school day. Finally, security cameras are positioned strategically in and outside the school building and are displayed on television screens located at the front security desk.

The building is adequately sized for the current population of 1,000 students. There are appropriate spaces to support student learning and the curriculum. There are enough classrooms for instruction, including the delivery of support services for special education and (ELL) students. There are a variety of spaces where teachers can plan in groups. The first and third floors in the new academic wing have two teacher workrooms and the second floor has one teacher work room; each has a work table, high volume photocopier, telephone, small office, and bathroom. Offices are occupied by the ELL tutors, the IB Coordinator, the ELL teacher, and the ASL teacher. The

older area of the building also has a teacher workroom in the art hallway for use of teachers in that area. These workrooms are large enough for common planning, and many teachers use these spaces throughout the day.

Each administrative office also has a conference room in addition to offices and desk areas for administrative assistants. The conference rooms are used for a variety of meetings, including PPTs as needed. Within these administrative offices, smaller offices house mental health professionals including two social workers, one psychologist, one speech pathologist, and six school counselors. Fitch High School's School-Based Health Center is located in a central area of the school providing easy access to students' needs including medical and psychological needs.

In terms of organization of each academic floor, all core classes (Math, English, Social Studies, Science, World Language) and special education rooms are designated classroom spaces on each floor. Other academic areas, Art, Business, Music, Technical Education, and Physical Education, are in the older area of the building near the cafeteria and gymnasium spaces. The library is across from the cafeteria with ample space for instruction, unassigned seniors, and students using computers or checking out materials.

The cafeteria space is large enough for school or community events; during the school day, it serves breakfast before school and four lunch "waves" which occur during the third block class each day (except for Tuesdays, when the early release relegates lunches to the last block). Groton Public Schools Food Services department is located in a second floor office suite in the academic wing, and this department operates the Fitch High School cafeteria as well as other schools in the district. The food services staff is Serve Safe Certified. Additionally, all manager level staff have QFO certification (which is the highest level certification for food handlers).

The Food Services Department also contracts SFS Food Sanitation Services of New England for all district schools. They use all their Cleaning and Sanitation Chemicals, and they get a monthly sanitation inspection in all of the kitchens. Cleaning protocols are always in place, especially during flu season, the staff regularly offers an extra sanitation of wiping down of all the surface's that the students touch in the cafeterias such as the tray slides and handles (milk, doors, fridges). All cashier stations also have a hand sanitizer, which they use about every ten minutes. During flu season, the policy is if you are sick stay home, and staff will be sent home if they are not well. When the district sees an increase in influenza or stomach bugs we jump in higher gear than usual and do the double daily wiping downs to keep the staff as well as students safe every day. The head of Food Services is also an Executive Board Member on the Ledge Light Health District, and he has first hand knowledge of where certain strains pop up. This is another layer contributing to the health and safety in the school and district. There are two gymnasiums at Fitch, a work out room, and a weight room. Additionally, the football field has an adjacent field house to support the athletic programming. Other campus athletic areas include the baseball field and tennis courts. Students have access to other fields throughout the town for sports practice and bussing is provided to the off campus locations, including the use of the pool at UConn Avery Point and Poquonnock Plains Park for many teams including soccer and lacrosse. There is more information about the needs in the athletic areas in Principle 5.4 in this report. The Robotics Team also makes use of a closed school building for its team's home base. At the end of this academic year, the Robotics Team will need to find a new location to meet just for the next calendar year. After that, the team expects to be granted the use of the gym (and adjacent classrooms) at S. B. Butler Elementary School, which has its own changes outlined in the Groton 2020 plan. We expect to establish a district wide "STEM-Center " which will house the robotics teams from the middle school, as well as those from the elementary schools.

In the older areas in the building, there is a lack of space for many specials (tech ed, band, health) and extracurricular activities. Additionally, classroom spaces for the fine arts, culinary, tech ed, music, the media center and athletics are in dire need of updating. While the academic wing has the benefits of the new renovation, the older area of the building still has the "temporary" post construction solution rather than its own renovation. While in previous years there was talk about "phase two" and "phase three" construction for the rest of the high school and athletic wing, no dependable funding has been allocated for these much needed repairs. In the new building, classrooms are large enough to hold up to 24 students with enough furniture for all students and staff. Students also are assigned a locker at the start of each year; however, few students use their lockers. Most classrooms have a white board and a projector that connects to a teacher laptop. Classrooms in the new

building also have Promethean boards; a good number of them are not working any more.

The school has an alternative high school program, the New Beginnings Alternative program, which has its own exclusive classroom suite with an administrative office and classrooms for the students assigned to it during the school day.

The building is clean and well-maintained. Faculty and family survey results share that 90% surveyed are happy with the maintenance of the building, and 56% of the students surveyed support this as well. The custodial staff cleans day and night, and they also see that safety regulations are being followed. The fire extinguishers and emergency lights are checked monthly by the custodial staff, and it is logged into a book in the head custodian's office. If any of them are not up to code, custodial staff submit work orders and call the Central Office, then it is taken care of immediately. On the campus itself, the school could use prominent signage to direct visitors to the various areas on the property. This will be even more important when the middle school opens in the academic year 2020-2021. A main test is done in the summer by the maintenance and the fire department. Moreover, the summer months are reserved for deep cleaning, painting, larger repairs, and equipment replacement are completed. The mechanical systems are in good working order, with the exception of the HVAC system, which functions inconsistently. Temperatures fluctuate significantly in both warm and cold weather. The Buildings and Grounds Department works with the school to monitor temperature data. However, any staff member interviewed will tell you that there are cold and hot areas throughout the building and offices. The temperature is often one or the other, and it seems to be a problem to get a comfortable temperature throughout the building. Most people dress in layers in the winter to prepare for the unpredictable inside temperatures throughout the building. The building meets all applicable federal and state laws and is in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.

SINCE COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE:

The building is staffed with security from 6:45am to 5:30 pm. Security have assigned locations, in addition to conducting perimeter checks and checking the doors to ensure that they are locked. They are a highly visible presence in the building, in addition to our School Resource Officer. New signage has been implemented throughout campus to provide better guide visitors and traffic. Students and staff are now required to have an ID badge on them at all times.

Additionally, a new front desk was installed that allows for better and more efficient visitor flow as well as a more secure entry into the building, also providing better visibility in multiple directions. This year the Raptor system was installed for visitor check-in, a process which identifies individuals who are not permitted in the building. Visitors ID's are scanned into the system and a temporary ID is provided to the individual if they are cleared to enter.

The school now also uses a three-level security plan: Building Secure, Classroom Secure, and Lockdown. Students and staff are educated through practice drills at the start of the school year. New phones have also been installed that allow for staff members to call a lockdown from any classroom in an emergency situation if necessary.

PRINCIPLE

Standard 5 Principle 3

RATING AT COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE

RATING AT DECENNIAL

Implementing

EXPLANATION

As a student body of about 995, the community and the district's governing body provides adequate funding to fully implement the curriculum, including co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities; however, the according to the NEASC faculty survey over 50% of teachers do not believe that Fitch High School has enough money for co-curricular learning programs. However, 53% of family members believe Fitch High School has enough money and resources for other kinds of co-curricular activities and 56% of families surveyed believe that the school has enough money and resources for athletic activities. According to the Groton Public School Board of Education 2019-2020 Budget Report, the Groton Board of Education along with local government officials saw fit to increase the Fitch High School's budget from \$161,896 to \$ 274,950 to support and assure that student programs, services, and resources are viable to student learning.

Given the increase, Fitch High School has been able to maintain and increase students' options by offering a wide variety of curriculum through each of the academic departments. Students are at liberty to choose courses including Early College Experience courses, Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate courses, Career Pathways, APEX virtual learning, and many others. Fitch High School, also, provides academic support through some of our courses including English Intervention, Math Intervention, TASC, and Falcon Academy, which is an after-school intervention program. Fitch High School provides services for our English Language Learners, our Special Education students as well as Special Education students transitioning from high school to career readiness. In addition to our core academic classes, Fitch High School encourages students to take advantage of the many specialized courses within the Arts Department, Culinary Department, Music Department, Technology and Computer Education Department, Business Education, and Physical and Health Education Department.

However, dependable funding has not been provided for sufficient professional and support staff to ensure appropriate class sizes and teacher load. For a student body of about 1,000 students, there are about 80 classroom teachers, seven tutors, 37 paraprofessionals, and seven support staff. Twenty-five students are the preferred maximum class size guidelines as approved by the Groton Board of Education. However, with the absence of "basic" level classes, the following concerns remain prevalent with the faculty: the number of students enrolled in the college level courses, the lack of support for the struggling/emerging learners in the college level courses, and the ability for teachers to adequately address the needs of the students who are challenged the most by college level curriculum. In addition, many teachers shared that college level classes have such varied student abilities that the disparity directly impacts student success, skill building, and overall achievement.

In addition, dependable funding has not been sufficient for instructional materials and supplies, equipment, technology, and resources to support library services and information technology. While the district is responsible for providing technology that would be considered "big item ticket" purchases, each department determines whether instructional materials and supplies, equipment, technology, and other resources are needed. As the district transitions to new and improved interactive projectors, the technology in the classrooms is not always functional. Without updates, classroom technology continues to deteriorate. The Promethean Boards in many of the classrooms are inoperable. There are a number of teachers with inadequate laptops. Furthermore, there are not any adequate loaner laptops when a teacher laptop needs servicing. In the survey, 52% of faculty members state that they do not have sufficient access to the instructional materials they need which includes books, supplies, equipment, and technology. However, each Fitch High School student has access to a school-issued

Chromebook to be used within and outside the classroom. As well, when asked whether their child has access to all learning materials he/she needs including books, equipment, and technology, 43% of parents stated it to be mostly true and 42% of parents believe it to be totally true.

SINCE THE COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE:

Grant-funding was acquired to hire a Career Pathways Coordinator to expand and enhance the program of studies to align with identified career pathways and specific courses offered at the high school. The goal is to provide opportunities for all students to succeed once they leave Fitch High School. The Falcon Academy has expanded to the Falcon RISE Academy and has become a key component in our SRBI process. Students continue to show active participation in a variety of clubs and activities, with participation being tracked through QR code scanning. Intervention classes for both English and Math have also been created, and a full-time Reading Specialist has been hired.

Technology has been upgraded in many classrooms with the replacement of old Promethean Boards, teacher laptops have been upgraded, and the one-to-one technology initiative has continued with students receiving individual laptops.

PRINCIPLE

NA

RATING AT COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE

Developing

PRINCIPLE

NA

RATING AT COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE

NA

Part 4 - Capacity for Continuous Growth as a Learning Organization

Please evaluate your school's capacity for growth as a learning organization based on the four criteria below - conceptual understanding, commitment, competency and capacity.

CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING Is there a shared understanding of what optimal or effective learning looks like in the school? How do you know?

The shared understanding of what optimal and/or effective teaching looks like at Fitch High School was determined by the teachers, when they developed the teaching strategies that support the Vision of the Graduate. They are:

R- Resilient Individual - The Fitch graduate demonstrates continuous commitment to personal growth and wellness by independently accepting challenges, engaging in hard work, and developing resilience to thrive as an individual. This is evidenced by:

Feedback and Reflection

1. Retakes/Reworking Assignments
2. Reflection
3. Problem Solving
4. Feedback

I - Innovative Learner - The Fitch graduate demonstrates continuous commitment to intellectual growth in critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and knowledge across the disciplines. This is evidenced by:

Higher-Level Questioning/Thinking

1. Open-ended questions
2. Close Reading
3. Research
4. Student choice/voice

S - Socially Aware Citizen - The Fitch graduate demonstrates continuous commitment to cultural understanding and interaction by actively promoting social awareness, civic responsibility, and dedication to the local and global community. This is evidenced by:

Connections to the Real World

1. Connections to the Real World
2. Community Builders
3. Perspective Taking

E - Engaged Communicator - The Fitch graduate demonstrates continuous commitment to effective and purposeful communication that exhibits open-mindedness, respectful collaboration, empathetic listening, and a clear, comprehensive presentation of ideas. This is evidenced by:

Collaborative Work

1. Group Work/Partner Work
2. Reflection
3. Class Discussion/ Socratic Seminar

COMMITMENT To what extent are members of the school community committed to the school's vision of the graduate? To what extent are members of the school community committed to a growth mindset for students? For adults? For the school? To what extent is the school community committed to alignment with the Standards for Accreditation?

As seen above, members of the teaching staff are committed to the Vision of the Graduate, implementing a variety of strategies that reflect RISE. Members of the teaching staff, some retired staff, tutors, paraprofessionals and other community members demonstrate commitment to our school community by serving as coaches, advisors, and mentors to the students of Fitch High School. This contributes to the fostering of a growth mindset for our entire school community. Members of the staff also give their time to attend activities that our students are involved in. This builds community and demonstrates to our students that our staff cares beyond the classroom.

While Fitch High School has introduced the Vision of the Graduate to our students and parents, we need to continue that work so that all members of the school community understand and are committed to that Vision.

Throughout this process, the school community has shown their commitment to the alignment with the Standards of Accreditation through their frequent collaboration, willingness to provide appropriate documentation, and willingness to take time out of their schedules to meet with the report-writing team.

COMPETENCY To what extent does the school community understand and acknowledge the changes that need to be made in order to align with the Standards? To what extent do faculty members, staff members, and school and district leaders have the skills, knowledge and dispositions necessary to help students achieve the school's vision of the graduate? What additional professional learning will be required for the school to align with the standards?

At this time, the school community understands and acknowledges the adjustments that need to be made throughout the process of aligning with the standards. Many of the components are in place and will be modified as necessary. Each department is responsible for creating a goal linked to the RISE Vision of the Graduate and the instructional strategies we linked to each RISE attribute. Building and district level meetings occur regularly where the Vision of the Graduate is revisited in an effort to assure that a common understanding is had by all stakeholders.

Additional Professional Development opportunities are encouraged as the staff works to align instructional strategies with RISE, the Vision of the Graduate, as well as with the standards as determined by the faculty.

<p>CAPACITY Does the school have the time, resources, and support needed to make progress on its identified priorities?</p>
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The school is looking for ways to replace lost teacher and department collaboration time. TLI time is three hours a month and other professional development days are scheduled as well. Administration in their efforts to support the importance of collaboration time has provided coverage for staff to participate in activities relevant to program initiatives and priority areas. The school will continue to work to provide time for teachers to collaborate.

Part 5 - Planning for the Decennial Visit

In preparing for the Decennial visit, the steering committee should identify any areas, in addition to the priority areas, that the school would like the visiting team to look at and provide feedback on. Also, the steering committee should begin to brainstorm possible activities they will plan during the visit to demonstrate growth in their priority areas.

ADDITIONAL AREAS OF FOCUS Please provide information on any particular areas for the visiting team to review more deeply concerning the current priority areas or any areas of growth for the future and suggest any specific areas of focus for the team's classroom observations.

Please refer to the draft Fitch High School - School Improvement Plan. Please note that this is a working document and is not complete at this time.

VISIT PLANNING What activities are you planning for the decennial visit to demonstrate growth in your priority areas?

NEASC Visit Schedule - Fitch High School

Sunday 12/4

Check in to Hotel (Mystic Hyatt)

3-5:00pm Team orientation

6:00pm Team dinner break

7:00pm Orientation and planning for the visit

Monday 12/5

7:15am Team arrival at the school and organizational meeting

7:45am School tour

8:30am-9:00am **Overview Presentation**

9:07am-10:32am ***R.I.S.E. (Vision of the Graduate) Priority Area meeting** with Principal Keleher, Amy McKenna, Carmita Hodge, Karley Reising, Lauren Olsen

9:07am-10:32am Observations (Period 2A)

10:32am-11:30am **Superintendent's Meeting** with Susan Austin and Phil Piazza

11:30pm Lunch

12:00-1:00pm **SRBI Priority Area Meeting** with Principal Keleher, Matt Brown, Adam Diskin, School Counselors

12:00-2:00pm Observations (Period 4A/1A)

3:30pm Check in to the hotel

4:00pm Team 'work time'

5:00pm **Board of Education Meeting**

6:00pm Dinner

7:00pm Team discussion and writing time

Tuesday 12/6

7:20am Team arrival at the school and organizational meeting

7:40am - 9:02am ***Curriculum Priority Area Meeting** with Principal Keleher, Phil Piazza, all department heads

7:40am - 9:02am Observations (Period 2B)

9:07am-10:32am Observations (Period 3B)/**Facility Tour** with **Damien Deck and Sam Kilpatrick**

10:32am-11:30am **Parent Meeting**

11:30am Lunch

12:00-1:00pm. ***Student Meeting** and observations (Period 4B/1B)

3:30pm Return to the hotel

4:00pm Team 'work time'

6:00pm Dinner

7:00pm Team discussion and writing time

Wednesday 12/7

7:20am Team arrival at the school

8:00am Team work time and finishing draft report

11:30am Lunch

12:00pm Debrief with the principal and leadership team

2:25pm Closing remarks to the faculty

Part 6 - School Improvement/Growth Plan

Please upload a copy of your most recent school improvement/growth plan and note that you have attached it.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT/GROWTH PLAN

The school improvement/growth plan is attached.

Related Files

- [2022 11 17-12 40 DRAFT FHS SIP.pdf](#)