

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

Commission on Public Schools



Committee on Public Secondary Schools

**Report of the Visiting Team for
Northfield Middle & High School**

Northfield, VT

April 02, 2017 - April 05, 2017

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STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

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

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

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

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

Teaching and Learning Standards

Core Values and Beliefs About Learning

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of and for Student Learning

Support Standards

School Culture and Leadership

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning

CORE VALUES, BELIEFS, AND LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Teaching and Learning Standard

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

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

CURRICULUM

Teaching and Learning Standard

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

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

INSTRUCTION

Teaching and Learning Standard

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

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

ASSESSMENT OF AND FOR STUDENT LEARNING

Teaching and Learning Standard

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

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

core values and beliefs about learning.

SCHOOL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

Support Standard

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

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

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

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Support Standard

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

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

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

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Support Standard

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

1. The community and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for:
 - a wide range of school programs and services
 - sufficient professional and support staff
 - ongoing professional development and curriculum revision
 - a full range of technology support
 - sufficient equipment
 - sufficient instructional materials and supplies.
2. The school develops, plans, and funds programs:
 - to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant
 - to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment
 - to keep the school clean on a daily basis.
3. The community funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses:
 - programs and services
 - enrollment changes and staffing needs
 - facility needs
 - technology
 - capital improvements.
4. Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget.
5. The school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services.
6. The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.
7. All professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school.
8. The school develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning.

School and Community Summary

School and Community Summary

Northfield High School opened in September 1870 with 331 students led by principal Marshall R. Peck. After calling several other buildings home, in 1955 the high school moved to where it remains today, between Vine and Cross Streets. In 1973, with the addition of grades seven and eight, the school became Northfield Junior-Senior High School. When sixth grade was added in 1993, the school switched to its present name: Northfield Middle and High School. Nestled in the Dog River Valley of Washington County in central Vermont, NMHS serves the town of Northfield and is part of the Washington South Supervisory Union, which also includes Northfield Elementary School and Roxbury Elementary School. A ten-mile drive from the state capital, Montpelier, Northfield is also home to Norwich University, the nation's oldest private military college, which now includes civilian and graduate programs as well. The town is also very proud of its covered bridges--six of them, including three in a row in Northfield Falls on the north end of town.

The 2010 census lists Northfield's population as 6,207. Median household income from 2010-2014 was \$72,328, with 12.2% of the families below the poverty level. For the 2016-2017 school year, 40% of NMHS students are eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch. 92.8% of Northfield's residents are white, 2.7% Hispanic, 2.4% mixed race, 1.3% African-American, 1% Asian, and 0.3% Native American. Northfield is also home to 601 veterans.

Norwich University, the school district, financial institutions, and a variety of small businesses make up Northfield's employers. Cabot Hosiery, a Northfield manufacturer since the 19th century, has been expanding recently; its line of Darn Tough Socks is sold worldwide, as well as to the U.S. military. Many residents also work in nearby larger cities like Barre and Montpelier. The unemployment rate as of December 2016 in the town of Northfield was 3.4%, with 4.4% in Roxbury, compared to 2.8% for the state of Vermont and just under 5% for the entire U.S.

The Northfield School District includes one elementary school, serving pre-kindergarten through grade five, and one middle/high school, serving grades six through twelve. The majority of students entering the Northfield Middle and High School come from the Northfield Elementary School. A small percentage of students come from other surrounding towns and attend Northfield Middle and High School under the Vermont school choice option through Act 150. Students from Northfield Middle and High School may attend the Randolph Technical Career Center in Randolph, Vermont, or the Barre Technical Center in Barre, Vermont for vocational and technical training. Quite a few NMHS juniors and seniors also take college courses at nearby Norwich University or online via the Vermont Virtual Learning Collaborative (VTVLC) as part of Vermont's dual enrollment program.

In recent years Northfield Middle High School has earned several distinctions. In 2014 Principal Ryan Parkman was recognized as Vermont Principal of the Year and STAR Program director Luke Foley was honored as Vermont Teacher of the Year. NMHS has also been ranked as one of Vermont's top 10 schools by *U.S. News & World Report* the past several years. Education First, an international student exchange program, has recognized Northfield Middle High School as an outstanding host school for foreign exchange students, several of whom choose NMHS as their U.S. school every year.

During the 2015-2016 school year, the Northfield School District served 657 students; 295 of these students attended the middle and high school. Twenty percent of NMHS students were on IEPs. One student was enrolled through Act 150 School Choice, and there were four foreign exchange students. In FY 2016, the per pupil expenditure (FY 2016 Education Spending Per Equalized Pupil) was \$13,910, compared to the state average of \$14,421. 63.1% of local residents' property taxes were spent on education in 2015-2016, with non-residents paying 64.3%.

Of the 305 NMHS students in September 2015, two were Asian, three were Hispanic, 11 were mixed race and 287 were white. There has not been a significant change in the ethnic/racial/cultural composition of the student body in the last ten years. Town population in Northfield has risen from 5,791 in 2000 to 6,072 in 2015. Middle/high school enrollment has decreased from 411 students in 2006-2007, to 347 students in 2011-2012, to

295 in the 2015-2016 school year. Pursuant to Vermont Act 46 encouraging smaller school districts to consolidate, the town has begun exploring a merger with the neighboring Orange North Supervisory Union. Voters are expected to vote in May 2017 on a proposal to merge the two districts, which already share a business manager and a curriculum coordinator.

The Vermont Department of Education's School Report for Northfield Middle High School for the 2015-2016 school year lists a student-teacher ratio of 9.52 compared to the state average of 10.41. The teacher attendance rate for 2015-2016, excluding professional days, was 93.5%. The student attendance rate for 2015-2016 was 94.02%. The four-year dropout rate for NMHS was 14.29% versus 9.23% for all of Vermont. The truancy rate was 1.02% compared to 4.65% statewide. The four-year graduation rate was 85.71% compared to 87.7% for the state. The average teacher salary was \$57,025, about \$100 below the state average. Of the 29 graduating seniors in 2016, 46% attended a four-year college, 22% attended a two-year college, 12% entered directly into the workforce, 12% entered the military, and 8% made other choices.

In addition, NMHS has begun implementing personalized learning plans (PLPs) through its TA program. Twice monthly the TA period is extended to 45 minutes for students to take part in activities and explore career and life choices on which to build personal learning plans. Students have begun building their PLPS using OneNote. NMHS has also begun working toward the transition to proficiency-based graduation requirements, with teachers exploring how students will demonstrate proficiency in the school's essential learning outcomes (ELOs) in their courses.

Throughout the year, students at Northfield Middle and High School are recognized for achievement in both academic and co-curricular areas. The middle school has won state recognition for its Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program, being designated as an exemplar school the past two years. Weekly assemblies recognize middle school students for positive behavior and academic achievement. Northfield High School recognizes a Marauder of the Week, as well as Marauders of the Quarter for each grade level, chosen by faculty for displaying exemplary Marauder attitude and behavior. Honorees are announced and applauded at a school assembly, receive prizes, and are profiled in the Northfield News. Honor rolls for excellence in academics are published on a quarterly basis in the local newspapers. The middle level holds an honors breakfast and awards assembly each quarter and invites parents to attend. The high school recently instituted a semester awards assembly and honors breakfast for students and parents, which held its first recognition ceremony in February 2017. High school students with high honors (all grades 90 or above) are eligible to receive a free ski pass at Sugarbush Ski Resort; students with high test scores on standardized tests are recognized by the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth; and National Merit Scholars are recognized by the College Board. An end-of-year awards assembly for the high school is held in June. Non-academic recognition is given at Booster Club Awards Nights three times a year and at the end-of-year awards assembly. NMHS music students are well represented every year at the Winooski Valley Music and Jazz Festivals and the Allstate Music Festival. Students have also been recognized at the state level for high achievement at the Vermont Science Fair and for sports championships, most recently for girls' golf and for boys' and girls' cross-country.

A range of additional educational opportunities are available to students and the community outside of the traditional programs. Nearby educational opportunities for Northfield High School students include Norwich University and Vermont Technical College (VTC) in Randolph, 27 miles away. Students from Northfield may attend the Vermont Academy of Science and Technology (VAST) at Vermont Technical College where they can begin their college career while completing high school graduation requirements. Adult education opportunities also include Woodbury College, the University of Vermont Extension Service, Central Vermont Adult Basic Education, the Community College of Vermont, the Vermont College of Fine Arts, the New England Culinary Institute, Vermont Adult Learning, and local technical centers.

Northfield Middle and High School has numerous business partnerships with the Northfield and central Vermont community. One of our strongest partnerships is with Norwich University. The education department at Norwich sends many of its students to the Northfield schools for their semester of student teaching, and the University offers us the use of its facilities when needed. Our hockey teams' "home ice" is the state-of-the-art Kreitzberg Arena on the Norwich campus, and each year our graduation ceremony takes place in the Norwich fieldhouse. Norwich grants a four-year full tuition scholarship to a Northfield graduating senior every year. Also, in August 2017, four NMHS students and one faculty member will go on their second service trip to Tanzania organized by

the Norwich Center for Civic Education.

Many NMHS students work or do job shadowing in the surrounding community, as well as take advantage of opportunities statewide. Students aspiring toward a career in medicine can participate in MedQuest, a four-day health careers exploration program at the University of Vermont. Every year two or three sophomores take part in the Hugh O'Brien Youth (HOBY) leadership conference. A range of programs offered by the Governor's Institute of Vermont in subjects like engineering, student activism, and the arts also attract NMHS students. For the past several years the guidance department has organized a Career Day on which students choose from a range of local professionals to meet with and learn about what it is actually like to be a chef, performing artist, or police officer. NMHS also hosts a Wellness Day on which community members address topics ranging from yoga to healthy eating to drug awareness with students.

Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations

Mission Statement

Northfield Middle and High School is a safe and healthy learning community that fosters the respect, accountability, and intellectual integrity needed to become capable, contributing citizens of a global society.

Core Values

Accountability

Respect for Self

Respect for Others

Respect for Community

Beliefs About Learning

- Learning is continuous and lifelong.
- Learning requires challenge, opportunities for practice, and the personal responsibility, commitment, and perseverance to improve.
- Learning is most effective within a safe, mutually respectful environment where students, teachers, and caregivers work cooperatively and support each other.

Learning Expectations

Student Expectations—Literacy Competency

The students will:

- Analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources to effectively respond through written, verbal, visual and technological means.
- Apply mathematical models to reason quantitatively and qualitatively.

- Utilize scientific inquiry and the engineering process to solve conventional and innovative problems.

Student Expectations—Character and Life Skills

The students will:

- Display ethical behavior and awareness of the physical and emotional needs of themselves and others.
- Exhibit integrity and independent work habits.
- Develop artistic means of self-expression.

Student Expectations--Civic

The students will:

- Demonstrate involvement in the community and an understanding of the responsibilities of being an engaged citizen.
- Demonstrate awareness of global responsibilities to others and the environment.

Related Files

- [2017-02-16-19:04_2016-mission-core-values-and-beliefs-about-learning-final.pdf](#)
- [2017-02-16-19:07_current-mission-statement-2005.pdf](#)

Introduction

Introduction

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

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

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

Teaching and Learning Standards

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of and for Student Learning

Support of Teaching and Learning Standards

School Culture and Leadership

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning

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

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Study

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Northfield Middle High School, a committee of 12 members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people. In addition to faculty members, the self-study committees included *(Chair: Please indicate here the number of students, parents, central office professionals, school board representatives, and citizens who were on the steering committee).*

The self-study of Northfield Middle High School extended over a period of 17 school months from September

2015 to March 2017. The visiting team was pleased to note that the entire school's faculty, several parents and some representatives from the community joined in the self-study deliberations.

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

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Team

A visiting team of 12 members was assigned by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Northfield Middle High School. The visiting team members spent four days in *Northfield*, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students and parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school aligns with the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. Since the members of the visiting team represented classroom teachers, guidance counselors, library/media specialists, school administrators, and central office administrators, (*Chair: Cite only those groups who were actually represented*) diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Northfield Middle High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 30 hours shadowing 12 students for a half day
- a total of 15 hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)
- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facility
- individual meetings with 24 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers

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

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

Standard 1 Indicator 1

Conclusions

Northfield Middle & High School engaged in a collaborative, thorough, and inclusive process since 2013 to develop a set of foundational commitments to the school community. These commitments are now reflected in a new core values and beliefs document intended to drive and influence every aspect of the school's culture and student achievement. A revised school mission is also included as an introductory statement which precedes the school's core values and beliefs about learning. The school improvement team, comprised of administrators, department leaders and students led the effort to draft the document and presented it to the faculty for feedback following the board's adoption of an accompanying Ends Policies in November 2014. These policies consisted of a global district mission, literacy competence, and character and life skills. A significant faculty response to the draft document was collected through a digitally submitted Lickert scale and a second draft based on the faculty feedback was reviewed by department heads. After departmental review, a third version was brought to the faculty and received unanimous approval on March 13, 2016. The core values and beliefs statement was then presented to the school board for final approval on April 4, 2016. Although initially rejected by the board because of a perceived priority on social and emotional development, upon further revision, the document was approved on November 7, 2016. The Endicott survey indicates that 68.5 percent of students and 76.9 percent of the parents are familiar with the school's core values and beliefs. The core values in the document are based on the school's mascot, a Marauder, and consequently, the school uses the acronym ARRR: Accountability, Respect for Self, Respect for Others, and Respect for Community. This is a popular symbol throughout the school and is easily recognizable. In classes and during non-instructional time, teachers and staff employ the PBIS approach to encourage appropriate student behavior. Students regularly earn redeemable "ARRR" tokens as positive reinforcements consistent with the core values. Teachers, administrators, and staff have acknowledged that the adoption of the core values was a direct result of the school's implementation of the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program. Additionally, the successful adoption of the school's core values further prompted staff to revise the school's previous mission statement which was implemented in 2005 but was not regarded as a practical or internalized vehicle for school advancement. As a result of the school's inclusive process to develop a revised mission and adopt a clear set of beliefs about learning including student civic and social expectations, the faculty, students, and community now have an effective way to ensure a commitment from key stakeholders to support subsequent initiatives for school improvement.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- school board
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 1 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school has developed challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students. In addition to beliefs about learning which emphasize literacy and numeracy, character and life skills as well as civic expectations addressing community involvement and global responsibilities are also included. Presently, there is limited evidence that shows connection to the use of specific and measurable criteria demonstrating student achievement based on the learning expectations, such as extensive implementation of school-wide rubrics. According to the Endicott survey, 52.8 percent of the staff has adopted school-wide analytical rubrics that define all of the 21st century learning expectations (academic, social, and civic). There is evidence that shows school-wide implementation of a writing rubric across all subject areas, particularly in English and social studies although it is not intentionally aligned with the school-wide learning expectations included in the school board Ends Policy on Literacy competence adopted in 2014. During classroom observations, there were infrequent explicit connections demonstrated between instruction and the school-wide rubrics, although during teacher interviews, some student work was presented which reflected clear and precise alignment. School leaders indicated that professional development activities in June 2017 will address the need for alignment between the school's 21st century expectations with school-wide rubrics. When the faculty at NMHS implements plans to ensure that revised school-wide rubrics or other forms of measurable criteria for success are developed and calibrated, the school will be able to determine each student's achievement on the 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 1 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Northfield's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are in some areas actively reflected in the culture of the school, drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations. The school has seamlessly integrated the core values, particularly at the middle school, through adoption of the PBIS program and promotion of the "ARRR" acronym. Students were observed participating in the token recognition program while the school's Gem ceremonies acknowledge students who have exceeded social and academic expectations. At the high school, students are recognized at Marauder of the Week assemblies. Spirit weeks and winter carnival events provide opportunities for middle and high school students to interact in a spirit of community. Other activities such as the school's Bridges program which provides extracurricular activities for middle school students, teacher advisories, January Jam (an evening event for students and families to choose courses) and Career Day have helped to create an atmosphere of accountability and respect throughout the school and engender a climate of support and cooperation. As noted in the Endicott survey, 75 percent of the school's staff indicate that when making teaching decisions, they consider the school's core values and beliefs about learning. Additionally, 84 percent of the students agree that they are familiar with the school's academic, civic, and social expectations; yet only 52.8 percent of the staff agree that the school's core values and beliefs are clear to them. The school has also developed individual teacher websites to communicate learning expectations, and the web-based grade book, Tyler SIS, allows instantaneous communication about student progress in addition to conveying teachers' beliefs about learning. Due to the recent adoption of the school's revised mission and the approval of the learning expectations in November 2016, the school has not had sufficient opportunity to meaningfully and intentionally use the mission, beliefs about learning, and student expectations to drive curriculum, instruction and assessment. A review of student work reflected limited direct connections between the core values and beliefs and instructional practices with the exception of the school-wide writing rubric and the visual arts curriculum. Professional development to address the need to better align all aspects of the instructional program with the school's mission, core values, and beliefs is planned for June 2017. This will include the integration of the VT Transferable Skills in each learning area. Resource allocations and decisions regarding facilities upgrades are based on the need to maintain the health, safety, and instructional environment of the school community, yet they are not explicitly driven by the school's mission, core values and beliefs. When the school begins to regularly reflect on its use of the core values and beliefs and designs school-wide rubrics or another form of specific and measurable criteria for each expectation to demonstrate student achievement, the school will enhance its efforts to ensure that the core values and beliefs about learning will drive all aspects of the school's culture and decision making.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 1 Indicator 4

Conclusions

The school recently completed a comprehensive process which led to the adoption of a revised mission statement including the use of the "ARRR" acronym to represent the school's core values and beliefs. In November 2016, the faculty, administration, and school board collaboratively created and ratified a belief statement about learning which included clear expectations regarding literacy competency, character and life skills, and student civic expectations. Plans are in place to revisit the impact of the school's mission as well as the core values and beliefs during the scheduled in-service days and department meetings in June 2017. When the school establishes a well-defined process to regularly review and revise its foundational documents, it will enhance the commitment and support of the school community to better ensure that all students have opportunities to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- department leaders
- school leadership

Standard 1 Commendations

Commendation

The inclusive process implemented by the school to create a meaningful and relevant mission statement as well as clear core values and beliefs about learning

Commendation

The easily recognizable and visible "ARRR" acronym designed to promote the school's core values

Commendation

The development of thoughtful and clear student expectations for literacy competency, character and life skills, and civic responsibility

Commendation

The coordination with the school board to link school-wide student expectations with the district's Ends Policies

Commendation

The implementation of the PBIS program that integrates the school's core values to teach and assess character, life skills, and civic expectations

Commendation

The variety of events that align with the school's core values that create a sense of community and pride throughout the middle and high school

Standard 1 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop a plan with a timeline for implementation which provides a detailed process to regularly review and revise as appropriate, the school mission and core values and beliefs about learning to ensure their successful integration into the school community and culture

Recommendation

Develop and implement school-wide rubrics or another form of measurable criteria for success to clearly demonstrate each student's progress in meeting each of the school's 21st century learning expectations

Recommendation

Provide professional development to support the development of school-wide rubrics to assess students' progress toward meeting the school's 21st century learning expectations

Recommendation

Implement a process to regularly review the school's core values and beliefs to ensure that student learning expectations in literacy competency, character and life skills, and civic expectations are fully integrated in all aspects of the school's decision-making and culture

Standard 2 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The curriculum is beginning to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Northfield Middle High School (NMHS) refers to 21st century learning expectations as learning expectations in their mission statement. Teachers are beginning to align their curriculum with expectations that measure student achievement in context to literacy competency, character and life skills, and civic responsibility. Academic departments have been assigned at least one learning expectation for which they must report out on student progress, but teachers indicate that this process is in the early stages. Additionally, there is not substantial evidence to confirm that students consistently are being assessed in accordance with the learning expectations; only 52.8 percent of surveyed teachers agree that the school has adopted school-wide analytic rubrics that define all of the 21st century learning expectations. Students are asked to reflect on their progress toward achieving these expectations in their personalized learning plans (PLP). However, some students were unable to articulate why they are asked to participate in this process. When NMHS fully implements curriculum that ensures that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations, students will understand which skills they are expected to master before graduation, and why these skills are relevant to post-secondary life.

Sources of Evidence

- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey
- school website

Standard 2 Indicator 2

Conclusions

Northfield Middle High School teachers write curriculum in a format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills; instructional strategies; and assessment practices that incorporate the use of school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics, but the curriculum has yet to fully incorporated the school's 21st century learning expectations. According to the Endicott survey, 72 percent of the staff agrees that there is a common, formal curriculum template that is used in all subject areas. However, while some teachers use the ATLAS Curriculum Management System to store and organize the curriculum for their courses, many do not. The ATLAS model necessitates that teachers include learning expectations, essential questions, and the content, skills, and vocabulary to be addressed in the unit and individual lessons therein. Additionally, it includes the assessments to be used, teaching strategies/activities, and the necessary resources. In interviews and discussions, few core teachers indicated that the curriculum in ATLAS mirrors what they currently use in the classroom. They attribute this to having fewer opportunities to update and contribute to their ATLAS accounts in recent years, and convey that there is curriculum in the system, but that curriculum is not extensive or up to date. Instead, most teachers express that their most updated curriculum is reflected on their class syllabi. Teachers confirm that the essential questions, concepts, content, skills, instructional strategies, and formative and summative assessments for their courses are included in their syllabi. Teachers and administration indicate that they are in the process of transitioning to the Tyler SIS platform, which is currently used to communicate grades, and ultimately will be used to record, store, and update curriculum that is aligned to the recently designed learning expectations.

The school's learning expectations are not clearly included in the written curriculum, as they have not been fully implemented yet and the curriculum is not all written in a common format. Most curriculum written by NMHS teachers includes a variety of instructional strategies. The syllabi distributed by the teachers in the English department describe the variety of formative and summative assessments that are used to gauge student understanding and proficiency in English courses. Teachers in the science department also reported that they highlight their instructional strategies in their syllabi. Additionally, according to the Endicott survey, 91 percent of NMHS teachers agree that they "use a variety and range of assessment strategies including formative and summative assessments." The Endicott survey reports that 72.6 percent of students also agree that teachers use a variety of assessment methods, while 17.3 percent of students are undecided. Teachers at NMHS use a school-wide learning habits rubric that assesses skills such as organization, timeliness, and work completion. They also have developed rubrics to measure transferrable skills. Some departments demonstrated use of common, department-wide rubrics. For instance, the English department has developed rubrics to assess various types of writing, and these rubrics are used by the science and history departments as well. Teachers at the middle school level also use common rubrics, as they frequently engage in cross-departmental instruction. When teachers and administration at Northfield Middle High School design and implement curriculum that is written in a common format and includes the school's 21st century learning expectations, it will help NMHS students prepare for the expectations and challenges they will experience.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 2 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Some NMHS curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem solving, higher order thinking, and cross-disciplinary learning, but only some curriculum emphasizes authentic learning opportunities in and out of school, and the curriculum rarely emphasizes informed and ethical use of technology. Teachers at NMHS design curriculum and assessments that are inquiry based and challenge students to solve problems and access higher order thinking. A strong majority (86.1 percent) of teachers at NMHS expressed that the curriculum of their departments emphasize depth of understanding and application of knowledge, according to the Endicott survey. Classroom observations and student work samples corroborate the teachers' assessment of their curriculum. In history courses, students participate in Socratic seminars and fishbowl activities; in eighth grade social studies, students are asked to compose a "Dear John" letter from the perspective of the American Colonies in which they break up with King George III; and in geometry, students are presented with a multi-layer problems that are designed to deepen their understanding as they continue to ask questions. Parents and students both expressed that there are fewer opportunities to access advanced courses due to the small size of the school. However, they also cited the availability of the Early College Program that allows students to take their senior year at Vermont colleges. The state's Dual Enrollment Program allows for students to take two college courses during their junior and senior years. Both of these programs are at no cost to the individual student. They are paid through the state's general education fund and the state then bills the local district. So far, the state has found federal "earmarks" to pay for these programs and there has not been a cost to local agencies. Additionally, NMHS offers various Advanced Placement (AP) and dual enrollment (DE) courses, an honors designation in core classes, and online courses through Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative (VTVLC), in which 20 students have enrolled for the 2016-2017 academic year.

Cross-disciplinary learning is common in the middle school, but is less common in the high school. At the middle school level, English and social studies teachers use common planning time to design numerous cross-disciplinary units, such as a unit on Ancient Greece, during which students from both classes are required to engage in an "Athens vs. Sparta" debate. Additionally, English and social studies class periods are often combined, as the wall between the two teachers' classrooms is collapsable. The sixth grade English and science teachers also collaborate regularly. At the high school level, the English and science departments collaborate to prepare students for the Sophomore Science Fair that takes place in the spring. English teachers work with students in Writing Academy to revise their scientific writing in preparation for the fair. Furthermore, the English and history departments have recently engaged in concurrent units on World War II and the Holocaust, which included a field trip to The Holocaust Museum in Montreal, QC. Nevertheless, teachers and students did not provide evidence of significant cross-discipline learning beyond these two examples. According to the Endicott survey, 62.1 percent of NMHS students say that their "teachers include topics from other subject areas in [their] classes."

NMHS offers some authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school. The school highlights its middle school robotics team, WSSU Farm-to-School committee, Interact club, and access to the Randolph Career and Technical Center as authentic learning opportunities for their students. The Students Taking Alternate Routes (STAR) program is an alternative program that combines project-based learning (PBL) with academic work. While an opportunity for students to pursue authentic learning, the STAR program may be difficult to access for students due to scheduling conflicts.

According to the Endicott survey, 81.5 percent of students and 74.5 percent of parents believe that they are knowledgeable about the ethical use of technology. However, the curriculum does not explicitly address acceptable use of technology. Students are provided with an acceptable use policy and are required to sign a waiver indicating that they have read the policy, and there is an informational display about ethical use of technology in the library. Regardless, there is no evidence to suggest that the NMHS curriculum explicitly addresses ethical use of technology.

When teachers and faculty design more opportunities for cross-disciplinary and authentic learning, and design

curriculum to address informed and ethical use of technology, they will provide students with a richer and more relevant learning experience and equip them with the skills necessary to be responsible digital citizens in our society.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- facility tour
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Alignment between the written curriculum and the taught curriculum is in the developing stages. The previous curriculum revisions were not recorded in the ATLAS system and therefore may not appear in a common format. Since the appointment of the new curriculum coordinator by the union, a common format for curriculum development and recording will be in place. Even though all curricula are not written in a common format as yet, the prevailing opinion is that the taught curriculum at NMHS consistently mirrors the written curriculum. According to the Endicott survey, 81 percent of staff report that their written curriculum mirrors the curriculum that they teach in their classrooms. Although teachers do not consistently use the ATLAS system to update and store their written curriculum, many assert that the accurate and updated curriculum for their courses is communicated through their syllabi. In interviews and teacher panels, all teachers unanimously agreed that their written and taught curriculum are aligned, regardless of the format in which the curriculum is written. Administration indicated that they know that the written curriculum is actually the taught curriculum by regular informal review and observations with classroom teachers. When the taught curriculum is aligned with the written curriculum and recorded in a common format, the NMHS faculty are more likely to guide students in meeting the objectives and mastering the skills that they have committed to facilitating in their courses, which in turn benefits the management and effectiveness of student learning.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 2 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist as works in progress between and among all academic areas within the school and there is some coordination with sending schools in the district. The WSSU Curriculum Development and Coordination Policy requires curriculum to be coordinated among schools within the supervisory union. Efforts to coordinate and align curriculum, both within the school and across the district, have not been implemented consistently in recent years due to administrative turnover and the absence of a full-time district curriculum coordinator. The curriculum coordinator position was a shared position with that person serving as half-time curriculum coordinator and half-time principal of a small elementary school in our district. The current curriculum coordinator is a full-time position, and is shared among schools in the supervisory union. Curriculum alignment across disciplines and within content areas at NMHS has focused on alignment with the Common Core Standards and the Vermont Transferable Skills, including the creation of indicators for proficiency-based graduation requirements. Dedicated time for curriculum development, review, and evaluation has been sporadic, with limited opportunities during the regular faculty and department meetings. A series of early release days during the year have provided some additional hours for curriculum work. Common planning time is afforded to core content teachers in the middle school during the 8th period of the school day, but class schedules in the high school typically preclude common planning time during the day for department or grade-level teams. NMHS has no formalized structure for faculty collaboration such as professional learning communities (PLCs) or critical friends groups. In-service days at the end of the year will focus on curriculum and assessment with a focus on creating grading scales connected to the PBGRs. Coordination and alignment of the curriculum among academic areas as well as vertical alignment across the district providing transparency will ensure that students are receiving the course content and skills necessary to meet PBGRs and to succeed as 21st century learners.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 6

Conclusions

In general, the staffing, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to implement the curriculum at NMHS. Average class size is eighteen students in the middle school and nine in the high school. Teachers identified a need for academic intervention supports for struggling students in the high school, citing the positive impact of those services as they already exist for the middle school. Academic departments have annual budgets for supplies, materials, equipment and other resources, however department leaders did not have input on the budget during the past two years. NMHS has a 1:1 laptop program in the high school and computer labs and an iPad cart for the middle school; these resources are funded through the technology department budget. The STAR program, an alternative teaching and learning program, has seen a 30 percent budget cut over the last three years but has replaced some of the funding with grants written by students engaged in service learning projects and with donations of equipment from the community. This year's library budget was cut 17 percent and was reduced by similar levels in previous years as well. The library's fiction collection has been updated over the past five years and resources for research have increasingly moved to digital format. The art department lacks funds for replacing the kiln used in their ceramics classes, and physical education classes are overcrowded at times, due in part to a lack of available outdoor space. Most staff believe that funding for co-curricular programs is adequate but a significant number of parents identified a need for increased funding. Providing sufficient funding for staff, resources for learning, and co-curricular activities will enable NMHS to meet the needs of learners and enhance opportunities for students to extend learning, leadership, and skill development beyond the classroom.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 7

Conclusions

The district provides the school's professional staff with adequate personnel and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research. Teachers have differing opinions on whether sufficient time is available for engaging in curriculum work, with 39 percent of staff stating that they have adequate time and 41 percent of staff who believe time is not adequate. Administrators have taken a number of steps to provide time and resources for curricular work, including weekly faculty meetings, early release days, access to curriculum specialists, and release time during the school day so that departments can receive training and undertake content-specific curricular revision. In addition, teachers have an average of 80 minutes of non-instructional time daily. Dr. Mahesh Sharma of the Center for Teaching/Learning Mathematics in Framingham, Massachusetts was brought to NMHS to work as a curricular coach with the math department. Additional consultants from Youth, Education, Tomorrow (YET) provided guidance in curricular revision and alignment between standards, transferrable skills, and proficiencies for core content area teams in half-day workshops. Teachers found the focused trainings and workshop time valuable and would like to have opportunities for leadership and involvement in identifying professional development needs and developing an on-going program for meeting those needs. Focusing and dedicating time and resources for curriculum evaluation and revision will ensure that classroom teaching at NMHS aligns with the formal curriculum and that students will succeed in meeting the PBGRs.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Commendations

Commendation

The development of a new mission statement and learning expectations that clarify vital and relevant skills to students

Commendation

The work that faculty and administration have begun to integrate learning expectations into written and taught curriculum

Commendation

The creation of curriculum that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content and skills, teaching strategies and assessment criteria with measurable criteria for success

Commendation

The commitment of the middle school team to designing curriculum that enables cross-disciplinary learning, which results in a more enriching educational experience for students

Commendation

The opportunities for authentic learning that are embedded in some areas of the NMHS curriculum which present opportunities for students to learn relevant skills and make connections to the greater community

Commendation

The new curriculum coordinator's efforts to begin the review and revision of curriculum within the building and content areas

Commendation

The efforts made to begin writing the curriculum in a common format and aligned to transferable skills

Commendation

The use of outside consultants to assist faculty in curriculum review and revision

Standard 2 Recommendations

Recommendation

Designate available time to the complete integration of the learning expectations into written and taught curriculum

Recommendation

Consistently use school-wide proficiency scales that measure students' mastery of the school's learning expectations

Recommendation

Develop curriculum that is written in a common format and embeds the school's 21st century learning expectations

Recommendation

Designate opportunities for professional staff to familiarize themselves to the Tyler SIS system so that it can ultimately house commonly written and updated curriculum

Recommendation

Allocate existing non-instructional time to design curriculum that emphasizes cross-departmental learning

Recommendation

Emphasize curricular strategies to incorporate opportunities for authentic learning for students to learn relevant skills and make connections to the greater community and informed and ethical use of technology

Recommendation

Continue to develop commonly formatted and documented curriculum in which the students actively engage

Recommendation

Set goals, expectations, and timelines for implementing curricular coordination across content areas and vertical articulation with sending schools

Recommendation

Increase collaborative engagement to evaluate, review, and revise curriculum

Recommendation

Engage teachers in identifying professional development resources to assist with curriculum, revision, and alignment

Standard 3 Indicator 1

Conclusions

Teachers at Northfield Middle High School informally examine their instructional practices, but ensuring the consistency of instructional practices with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations does not yet occur school-wide. NMHS has begun to align classroom instruction with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. Core values are posted in classrooms and students report that their teachers refer to these during instruction, however it is not evident that teachers formally examine instructional practices to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. While 64 percent of staff are in complete agreement that teachers continuously examine their instructional practices to ensure consistency with the school's core value and beliefs about learning, currently, there is no system in place for teachers to ensure formal examination and discussion of their instructional practices with one another, nor is there a system in place for supervisors to give frequent, formal or informal feedback to teachers regarding their instructional practices that is specific to the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. NMHS uses the Charlotte Danielson model of teacher evaluation which does not include an indicator specific to a school's mission, core values, or 21st century learning expectations. Teachers receive rubric-based feedback on five different sub-components of their instructional practice as part of every evaluation cycle. Experienced teachers are evaluated on a three-year cycle, with new teachers evaluated more frequently. One teacher indicated that he had had several observations with his supervisor after which he received informal feedback on his instruction, although it did not specifically reference the school's mission, core values and beliefs, or 21st century learning expectations. When classroom instruction is purposefully aligned to the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, a more formalized and purposeful means of ensuring that the school's core values and expectations will be established.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 3 Indicator 2

Conclusions

Teachers' instructional practices at Northfield Middle High School inconsistently support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by; personalizing instruction, engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning, engaging students as active and self-directed learners, emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking, applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, engaging students in self-assessment and reflection, and integrating technology. NMHS has crafted and adopted 21st century learning expectations for all students in grades 6-12. Some classrooms display these and a school-wide writing rubric is in use for some student writing assessment. Students feel that teachers often personalize instruction for them, and 65 percent of students report that their teachers give them choices with their activities and assignments. Teachers' instructional practices at NMHS are primarily limited to their respective disciplines and do not reflect cross-disciplinary learning. NMHS classes do not consistently emphasize higher order thinking. Observation data demonstrated that higher order thinking was evident in 44 percent of the lessons observed during the visit. Teachers report that they often use inquiry and problem solving during instruction. However, classwork that requires higher order thinking skills is limited and is evident mainly at the middle school grades and in the Students Taking Alternative Routes (STAR) program. While the STAR program, a cross-disciplinary, multi-sensory approach to teaching and learning, was originally designed to engage struggling students in relevant, authentic learning, its design and general approach lends itself to promoting higher order thinking and would likely benefit most, if not all students. To a limited extent, students engage in self-assessment and reflection. Students report that they often work with partners on quizzes and peer edit writing, but self-assessment is not a frequent and established instructional practice. Technology is evident in most classrooms and is well-integrated into teachers' instruction. Most classrooms have ceiling mounted LCD projectors which teachers use for large group instruction, and some rooms have interactive SMART Boards. Students use laptop computers and iPads for classwork and assignments, and the high school has established a 1:1 ratio for student laptops. Focusing instructional practices and content on application of knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, and engaging students in self-assessment of their learning, will promote higher order thinking skills and will ensure that students reach the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- student shadowing
- student work
- teachers
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 3 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Teachers at Northfield Middle & High School provide additional support and alternative strategies for students within the regular classroom, but the use of formative assessment, differentiation, and grouping practices is in the emerging stages. Teachers regularly and effectively use group activities in class. Students are allowed to partner for some quizzes, projects and assignments, and, in most cases, choose the student(s) with whom they work. While students are given some choice and a level of social comfort, grouping that is not purposeful or strategically organized to meet the needs of each student does not necessarily lead to better instructional outcomes. Teachers at NMHS use formative assessments with their students to measure instructional outcomes, but these are primarily limited to warm-up activities and exit tickets. Use of formative assessment strategies during instruction is not a pervasive practice at the high school according to students and teachers, but is more often used at the middle school. Small teacher-to-student ratios enable teachers to make connections with each student and provides for flexibility and differentiation for students during instructional time, but instructional differentiation is not strategic nor based on best teaching practices. Teachers regularly provide additional support and alternative strategies to students within the regular classroom. Students are frequently given a choice in assignments and projects; teachers work one-on-one with students during class time, and the school offers students extra help through after-school homework club. Students at the high school who struggle to learn in a traditional classroom setting may choose to attend the Students Taking Alternative Routes (STAR) program. According to student data, a comparison of their last year in a traditional school setting to their first year in the STAR learning environment, the program saw a 33 percent increase in student attendance, a 25 percent increase in grade point average, and an 82 percent decrease in reported behavior incidents. When teachers at NMHS provide additional support and alternative strategies for students within the regular classroom, and implement the use of formative assessments during instruction, teachers will increase their ability to strategically differentiate and purposefully organize group learning activities.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- student shadowing
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey

Standard 3 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Teachers at NMHS individually use student achievement data, examine student work, use feedback and current research, and engage in professional discourse to improve their own instruction. However, formal collaboration on instructional practices is evident only in the middle school. NMHS has regularly scheduled meetings three times a year when teams of teachers review student assessment data. Teachers use data compiled from the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing, and report that the work during these “data days” is collaborative and productive. Each meeting lasts for one hour. This data is used to develop intervention plans for students who demonstrate the need for increased academic support in math, reading, and language usage. The extent that this data is used to inform instruction in the core environment is unclear. Mathematics teachers use online programs such as the IXL website and Khan Academy, to support student skill development. Teachers use the data acquired from each online assignment to help them provide ongoing support to each student. Teachers in the middle school have time set aside for ongoing collaboration to discuss current research, examine student learning, and engage one another in professional discourse. The high school lacks dedicated time in the schedule for teachers to meet for the purpose of collaboration and engagement in professional discourse focused on their instructional practices. While individual teachers at all grade levels work diligently to improve their own craft, there is currently no formal, consistent, ongoing system for high school teachers to share their learning and to engage one another in professional growth. Ensuring that consistent and deliberate collaboration occurs among faculty using student assessment data, feedback, and current research will result in improved instruction and learning and promote teacher growth as practitioners.

Sources of Evidence

- teacher interview
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Teachers at Northfield Middle High School, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices by actively engaging in professional development and course work above and beyond district and state initiatives. Ninety-seven percent of NMHS staff indicate that teachers are experts in their content area. Additionally, 83 percent of students feel that their teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. Teachers are dedicated and actively participate in professional development to improve and enhance instruction in their discipline. Much of this learning takes place outside of the school district's professional development offerings. Teachers pursue these opportunities on their own time. Teachers incorporate what they have learned into their instructional practices to increase student engagement and learning in their classes. Teachers at NMHS actively maintain and increase their expertise in their respective content areas resulting in increased opportunities to enrich their students' learning.

Sources of Evidence

- teacher interview
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Commendations

Commendation

The teachers' dedication to provide personalized instruction for students

Commendation

The effective collaboration of the middle school team to improve student learning

Commendation

The intentional and purposeful integration of the school's core values and 21st century learning expectations as a prominent part of instruction at the middle school

Commendation

The effective integration and use of technology as a part of instruction at all grade levels and disciplines

Commendation

The numerous opportunities provided by teachers for students to receive additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom

Commendation

The STAR program, open to all students, that provides opportunities to engage in self-directed learning in a non-traditional environment

Commendation

The extensive and varied pursuit of individual expertise by teachers at NMHS to remain current in their field

Standard 3 Recommendations

Recommendation

Formalize opportunities for teachers to examine instructional practices to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations

Recommendation

Increase the presence of higher order thinking, authentic tasks, self-assessment, and cross-disciplinary learning across all areas of the high school to improve instruction and to ensure that students reach the school's 21st century learning expectations

Recommendation

Use formative assessment data, strategic grouping practices, and targeted differentiation to provide students with needed learning strategies and supports and to improve instruction

Recommendation

Use data from all available sources to inform instructional improvements

Recommendation

Use available time to formalize opportunities for teachers to consistently, meaningfully, and deliberately collaborate using student assessment data, feedback, and current research to improved instruction

Standard 4 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The professional staff has yet to fully implement formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics. Proficiency-based graduation requirements have been adopted and finalized by each department, although rubrics to accompany those have not been created yet. Transferable skills have been adopted from those created by the Vermont Agency of Education (Vermont AOE). The rubrics to accompany the transferable skills have also been adapted from the Vermont AOE. All early release days were focused on transferable skills as is evident in the district's PD plan for 2016-2017. The school does employ a learning habits rubric that every teacher uses. Most students use this rubric to self-assesses weekly in each core class, with teacher input. There is also evidence at NMHS of common writing rubrics that are used at some grade levels; for example, the grade 9/10 argument writing rubric. When professional staff employs a formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations, individual and school-wide data can be used to inform curriculum and instruction.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- school leadership

Standard 4 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school's professional staff is in the early stages of communicating individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students' families, although students are aware of their own achievement data. The school's professional staff currently does not have a process in place to communicate the school's progress in achieving its 21st century learning expectations to the school community. The online grading system the school uses, Tyler SIS, has the current limitation that rubrics cannot be attached to students' gradebooks. However, Tyler SIS does show a learning habits grade associated with each assignment as well as the weekly habits of learning rubric score, although families must log in to the portal in order to see those itemized grades for courses. Report cards only show a grade average for each course. That grade includes the students' habits of learning grade for each assignment. Parents stated they are confused about what the 21st century learning expectations are, but did reference technology initiatives they know the school is engaged in at this time. Students are often asked to self-assess using both transferable skills rubrics and learning habits rubrics. Both of these rubrics are regularly implemented across most classrooms in the school with the majority of the discussion happening with students during a guidance-run middle school course entitled 21st Century. Students are familiar with the transferable skills at most grade levels and the learning habits at all grade levels, but parents are unaware due in part to technology limitations. When student and whole-school progress is reported to students, families, and the school community, students will see more value in the 21st century learning expectations, and they will better support student learning and achievement.

Sources of Evidence

- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teacher interview

Standard 4 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Professional staff periodically collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. Grade level teams meet three times per year at the end of each quarter to review Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing data, behavioral data, and current class grades as referenced by multiple teachers. This information is communicated in a color-coded spreadsheet that teachers have constant access to. The English department has created a Writing Academy for the ninth and tenth grade where the MAP scores are reviewed with each student. Based on that data, students are recommended for various assignments that are designed to increase their skills in particular writing domains. In the middle level grades, students are automatically enrolled in a course called Intervention. As part of this course, students check their grades, formulate plans for improvement, and revise assignments to achieve proficiency. Students also complete a software called Study Island, in which teachers recommend specific skills to students based on their standardized test scores. When professional staff consistently analyzes data to respond to inequities in student achievement, targeted supports can be offered to support all students and to improve student achievement.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- school leadership

Standard 4 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Prior to each unit of study, teachers infrequently communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed. Weekly assignment sheets are beginning to address this communication, but only list assignments and not the criteria to follow. NMHS teachers communicate course goals through syllabi, but not all include learning expectations. The focus of current and future professional development is to create rubrics to communicate these criteria. Presentation of these rubrics prior to a unit of study is rare, although some teachers provide unit outlines with rubrics. Clear classroom norms and routines are established throughout the school so that students know daily expectations while in the classroom. Expectations of overall units were less evident. When teachers communicate to the students the applicable 21st century learning expectations and how they relate to the unit, student ownership and achievement will increase.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- student work
- teacher interview

Standard 4 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Prior to summative assessments, teachers frequently provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success, such as corresponding rubrics which define targeted high levels of achievement. Teachers provide checklists for summative assessments if a rubric is not given ahead of time. Some content teachers provide students with not only criteria but also with rubrics and work samples to inform students' products. In the art department, every project has a guiding document that links content standards, transferable skills, and a project guiding checklists with grade scales. Students are given the document before they begin a project and are either shown student work samples in the classroom or copies are provided in the document. Specifically in the English department, teachers seek out exemplar work to share with future classes. In multiple classrooms and subjects, an effort has been made to save student work in files for future use and some work is evident on the walls of the classroom as well. In some cases teacher websites are also helpful in providing students with criteria and examples of summative projects. In the Endicott survey, 64.5 percent of students agree with the statement, "I understand in advance, what work I have to accomplish to meet my teachers' expectations." When students are given clearly defined criteria for summative assessments and achievement targets ahead of time, student performance will improve and more likely reflect proficiency.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students

Standard 4 Indicator 6

Conclusions

In each unit of study across the school, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including emerging formative strategies and summative assessments. NMHS teachers report the following use of formative assessments: quizzes; "what do I know" check-ins; reaching a required proficiency in the unit before moving on to the summative assessment. Examples of observed formative assessments while visiting classrooms included "problems of the day", class self-assessment of essays, warm-ups to check for understanding, exit tickets and peer conferencing. Summative assessments observed through student work samples include science fair projects, choice writing prompts, partner math quizzes, and end-of-unit tests. Middle school teachers reported summative assessments as fluid assessments, while high school teacher report as fixed assessments. In the Endicott survey, 92 percent of teachers report total agreement to using a variety and range of assessment strategies. Only 3 percent of teachers respond with total disagreement to the same prompt. The continued use of a wide range of assessment strategies will ensure teachers are constantly adjusting their curriculum to meet the levels of all students and therefore will increase student achievement.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 4 Indicator 7

Conclusions

Teachers at NMHS have limited opportunities to collaborate in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessment as a direct result of the school size. NMHS teachers report professional development during the winter of 2017 working with the curriculum coordinator and the Youth Educating Tomorrow (YET) program that specifically addressed common assessments and how they aligned with learning expectations. The focus of the district's professional development has been on creating transferable skills rubrics. Middle school teachers report team meeting time during which upcoming assessments are discussed, especially in middle level math/science, where the curriculum is being taught by two teachers. Although some high school teachers have the same preparation period available within a department, there is no formal process to work on assessments. NMHS and Vermont AOE currently have multiple initiatives involving assessment that are in constant flux. Teachers collaborating on formative, summative, and common assessments will directly improve teacher instruction and student achievement.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 8

Conclusions

Teachers often provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work. In the student work samples, the English department provided a graphic organizer whereby the students receive extensive feedback before they write their associated essays. Students take those suggestions and feedback into consideration in their writing. Students are also actively engaging in peer conferencing as well as teacher conferencing in order to get feedback on writing pieces with the intent of supporting opportunities for continual revision. In the high school, final essays are being shifted from "works in progress" to final assessments that are unable to be revised. In math classes students often take formative assessments and receive teacher feedback before they take graded assignments. Occasionally, if students get to a summative assessment and it is evident that they still need time to focus on skills from a given unit, students are provided opportunities to go back and relearn, revise and redo. Teachers have also changed their methods of feedback during projects or units if they notice it is necessary. For example, a middle school humanities project was observed to be challenging for all students so an assignment was created to be a formative check-in on student understanding, and then a conferencing aspect was added to make sure students were ready to move on. The Intervention course in the middle school also offers a mode for students to get some of the revision work done during the school day. While it is evident that not all teachers use the same modes of feedback, conferencing was evident throughout the middle school as an embedded practice. When teachers provide timely and corrective feedback to students, not only will students take advantage of the opportunity to improve their work, but their learning will continue and achievement will increase.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students

Standard 4 Indicator 9

Conclusions

Some teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning. Formative assessments were observable in several classes whether in the form of verbal prompts/questioning and contributions or shorter assignments that students received feedback on that was not always graded. There were multiple examples of formative assessment in student work samples as well that include graphic organizers with feedback attached. Teachers regularly use exit tickets, warm-ups, short quizzes designed for quick check-ins as well as shorter assignments that are coupled with peer or teacher conferencing. Through the process of formative assessment, many teachers have seen the need to offer enrichment and extension opportunities that include working on future units' work or even taking virtual courses through Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative (VTVLC). Most classes provide either project outlines ahead of time or break larger summative assessments up into smaller more manageable chunks for students to complete as they work their way through units. Sometimes these chunks are combined for a final result and sometimes the chunks are used to outline a larger task that students will work on at the end of a unit. Other examples of formative assessment include short reading quizzes and check-ins, class discussions, and even practice assignments before students complete graded assignments (evident specifically in AP courses). When teachers regularly implement formative assessments in their classes, specifically to inform instruction, more students will find success with the curriculum and be prepared to move on to more complex skills or topics.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- student shadowing
- student work
- teachers
- students

Standard 4 Indicator 10

Conclusions

Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, including common course and common grade-level assessments and standardized assessments; however, NMHS has yet to review data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions and survey data from current students and alumni. Three times each school year, during faculty meeting time, data teams meet by grade level to look at a spreadsheet that is prepared ahead of time and available to teachers whenever they would like to access that information. The spreadsheet includes course grades, behavioral data, and MAP testing data. As teams, they look to target struggling students and to problem-solve ways to get those students what they need to become proficient. Previous years' professional development included relating claims and evidence to the Common Core Standards and to writing across the curriculum. As grade level teams, teachers shared their students' work on claims and evidence in order to inform their curriculum and practices within their own classrooms. Students in the middle school also participate in an Intervention course within which they track their own grades and organizational skills. The intervention teacher uses students' MAP testing data to assign students skills through a software called Study Island. Students during this time not only practice their skills that are identified as being weaker, but they are given the opportunity to work on and to revise their course assignments as well as to participate in enrichment opportunities such as virtual courses. When teachers and administrators individually examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum, it informs classroom practice; when that same data is examined collaboratively, common practices can be established to better support students.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers

Standard 4 Indicator 11

Conclusions

Grading and reporting practices are occasionally reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. During the summer, the NMHS leadership committee met to establish school-wide consensus for reporting practices in Tyler SIS. They determined that every teacher at all grade levels and for every subject would report on the same five categories: writing, homework, tests/quizzes, classwork and learning habits. When the school year began, the committee presented its goal of these standardized categories to the faculty who have embraced the change. Throughout the school year the leadership team has put forth various reminders about updating grades and/or the frequency at which this should be done. Even still, students report a lag in some classes on reporting out grades in Tyler SIS from some teachers. Weekly meetings in the middle school allow for conversations among teachers around grading practices and associated norms. Such meetings are less frequent in the high school as only one department meeting per month is dedicated to department time, and even then the conversation may not be solely around establishing norms for grading. Teachers report a more unified approach to grading than in previous years. When grading and reporting practices are continuously and consistently reviewed, fairness to students is established, and stakeholders' trust in the school's grading system and policy will increase.

Sources of Evidence

- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Commendations

Commendation

The implementation of the clearly defined learning habits rubric across all subjects and grade levels that assists students to self-assess their work

Commendation

The multitude of interventions students are offered to complete revisions in the middle school

Commendation

The high school Writing Academy and middle school Intervention course available to support students' learning

Commendation

The use of MAP data to reduce inequities in student achievement and to prescribe interventions

Commendation

The organization and assembly of data spreadsheets for data team meetings that inform interventions for struggling students

Commendation

The exemplar student work posted in many classrooms used to model levels of student proficiency

Commendation

The adjustment of instructional methods to address a wide skill range based on formative assessment data and the opportunities students are afforded to revise their work to show proficiency

Commendation

The links between proficiency-based graduation requirements, transferable skills, and school learning expectations currently being fostered to communicate student progress

Commendation

The emerging use of formative assessment data to inform instruction

Commendation

The identification of five distinct categories to report student achievement data

Standard 4 Recommendations

Recommendation

Increase the use of formative assessments at the high school level and continue to offer students the opportunities to revise work after both formative and summative assessments

Recommendation

Clearly define assessment criteria for formative and summative assignments and communicate these to the students

Recommendation

Ensure that all students are conversant in the common language of the school's rubrics and grading scales

Recommendation

Seek additional sources of information to inform revisions to curriculum and instruction

Recommendation

Ensure that individual and school-wide progress toward meeting the school's 21st century learning expectations is reported to the students, their families, and the community in a timely manner

Recommendation

Implement a plan for the professional staff to collect and review student work periodically in order to inform instruction

Standard 5 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The Northfield Middle High School community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all. Parents and community members cite multiple examples of staff caring and supporting students' needs, including working with students outside regular school hours, using the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and supporting students at co-curricular events. The expectations for all discipline and attendance policies are distributed in print at the beginning of each school year. The school fosters student responsibility for learning in a variety of ways. These include teachers encouraging students to contact them when class time is missed, the availability of homework club for all grades after school, updated grades on Tyler SIS for students and parents to check, and teacher advisory (TA) scheduled during each day. Students feel safe at school and parents and staff believe that the school's culture is safe, positive, and supportive. Students are actively encouraged to take Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Students can attend Randolph Vocational and Technical Center, or take dual enrollment and early college opportunities at Norwich University, Community College of Vermont (CCV), and Vermont Technical College. The safe, positive, respectful, and supportive learning environment, and high expectations for all, promotes student voice, shared ownership, and pride in the school.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- facility tour
- teachers
- students
- parents
- community members
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 2

Conclusions

Northfield Middle High School is equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Throughout their high school years, students are enrolled in numerous heterogeneously grouped classes. At the middle level, all classes are heterogeneously grouped and the curriculum is replete with challenging, age-appropriate, authentic learning opportunities that scaffold each student's successful transition to high school. In the high school, every core department offers heterogeneous classes. Student grouping patterns ensure that all students, regardless of ability level, have challenging learning experiences in all curriculum areas. High school students are expected to earn credit in English (4 years), math (3 years), social studies (3 years), and science (3 years), which are grouped heterogeneously. Students may declare a more challenging honors designation and all Advanced Placement courses are open enrollment for all students who have met the prerequisite requirements. There is a diversity of enrollment in all courses and the school attempts to heterogeneously group all classes. The school fosters heterogeneity, allowing every student to be enrolled in at least one heterogeneous core course in their high school experience and includes high expectations for all students.

Sources of Evidence

- teacher interview
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Indicator 3

Conclusions

There is a formal, ongoing program at Northfield Middle High School through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. The teacher advisory (TA) program provides each student with an opportunity to connect with an adult in school regularly and to remain with that adult throughout their years at school. There are two individual TA programs. One in the middle school for grades 6-8, and another in grades 9-12. Twice a month, the TA program is extended to support students in developing their personalized learning plan (PLP), which is a mandate of the state beginning with the class of 2020. Teacher advisors are considered the main connection point between parents and the school community. There are many other programs that provide support to students in their educational experience. The TA program supports each student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations and fosters close connections between the students and their school.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 5 Indicator 4

Conclusions

The principal and professional staff at Northfield Middle High School, regularly engage in a variety of professional efforts designed to improve student learning including professional discourse, resources outside of the school, formal time to implement professional development, and opportunities to apply the skills, practices and ideas gained to improve curriculum, instruction and assessment. The school has a one-hour faculty meeting every Wednesday. These meetings include full faculty meetings, department meetings, and data meetings to analyze student data such as grades, testing scores, and the Student Risk Screening Scale (SRSS). Teachers exchange best practice ideas in areas of common assessments and areas of Common Core Standards. The school budgets time and money for teachers to attend professional development including reimbursement for coursework. These reimbursements are based on the average cost of six credits at UVM, Johnson State, Lyndon State, other Vermont state colleges, and Norwich University. However, many faculty members were unclear regarding the extent of the professional development opportunities available to them, and some expressed interest in collaborating with administration to develop a comprehensive professional development plan. Professional development also includes the Building Effective Support for Teaching Students with Behavioral Challenges Institute (BEST), League of Innovative Schools, New England Association of Schools and Colleges, and statewide policy and leadership panels. The professional staff's engagement in multiple professional development activities and the application of the skills, practices, and ideas gained result in improved curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and improved student learning.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 5 Indicator 5

Conclusions

School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning. At NMHS, the supervision and evaluation process has been thoughtfully designed based on Charlotte Danielson's model to include planning and preparation, the classroom environment, instructional practice, and professional responsibilities. Each member of the teaching staff is placed on a three-year observation cycle, during which administration and teachers agree on goals, goal implementation, observations and reviews. New teachers engage in a two-day orientation at the beginning of the school year, and first-year teachers are additionally assigned a peer mentor for two years. This process did not seem clear to some teachers, although they were aware of the general process. As a result, the formal process of evaluation and supervision supports teachers in their professional development.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 6

Conclusions

The organization of time at NMHS moderately supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students. Most of the middle school students have academic core classes in the morning, followed by an afternoon of specials that include art, writing, family and consumer science, physical education, health, 21st century skills, and Intervention classes. All middle school students and ninth and tenth graders take Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing three times each year. The middle school data team, guidance counselors, and special educators analyze the data collected. After examining the data, students are then assigned customized skill boosters to work on their individual academic needs. Middle level teachers are able to have common planning time. Although time is available in the present schedule, teachers at the high school level do not have common planning time in all departments due to the frequency of single section classes that must be offered to maximize course offerings. Maximizing the available planning time at all levels will foster professional collaboration among teachers to focus on research-based instructional improvements and increased learning for students.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 5 Indicator 7

Conclusions

Student loads and class sizes at Northfield Middle High School enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. The school demonstrates a student-teacher ratio of 9.52:1 and that class size allows for effective instruction and individualized learning. There has been a reduction in electives and faculty in recent years and for the current year this representation may seem false. The class size in many of the middle school classes nears twenty-four students per teacher. The school values the interest of students who seek learning in many different areas outside of mainstream courses, even if some roster sizes are small. Examples of the smaller sections include Advanced Placement (AP) Literature with seven students, Advanced Placement Biology with nine students, Spanish III with five students, and French III with four students. Currently, twelve students are enrolled in the alternative education program (STAR-Students Taking Alternate Routes) that is staffed by a full-time teacher and one para-educator. Current student loads and small class sizes improve the opportunities for teachers to differentiate and personalize instruction.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 8

Conclusions

The principal at Northfield Middle High School, working with other building leaders, provides a great amount of instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The principal and assistant principal are an integral part of the school's leadership team. The leadership team consists of ten teachers and two administrators, and the team's role is to serve the school as the leadership and policy-making team. The team meets once in the summer to set the goals for the upcoming school year and aligns these goals to the core values and beliefs. Over the past four years, goals have been deeply rooted in classroom instruction. These goals have included technology integration in the classroom (one-to-one), common assessments, school-wide rubrics, and digital portfolios to record individual student progress toward meeting the school's learning expectations. The principal and assistant principal also lead the multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) team to create plans for individual student success. These plans may include attendance, credit recovery, and instruction for those students who have learning, social, and emotional disabilities. The principal approves professional development opportunities that are funded by the district and encourages and supports teachers to search for professional development opportunities. The principal and assistant principal meet with teachers in October to establish their individual goals and then meet with each teacher during the school year to assess progress toward those goals. Students benefit and demonstrate improvement in achievement levels when instructional leadership is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- department leaders
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 9

Conclusions

Some teachers at NMHS are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision making that promote responsibility and ownership, however, the roles of parents and students in the decision-making process are limited. Parents, students, and educators interact and collaborate as partners in the education of students at school, but the Endicott survey indicates that only 44.4 percent of student respondents indicate that they have input in important decisions made at their school. At Northfield, parents are not usually actively involved in the decision-making process at school. Two important roles for parent in the decision making process have been their inclusion in the last principal hiring committee and recently, as a part of the school improvement team. Students are actively involved in the decision making, stewardship, and ownership of policy at NMHS through a variety of forums like student council, conferencing with the principal, and bringing forward new ideas for student activities. Student council is a volunteer governing board that hosts many events at school. Student council represents the voice of the high school student, and works with administration to make many cultural and environmental changes within the school. When teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision making, they will feel more ownership of their school and will promote student growth.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 10

Conclusions

The teachers at Northfield Middle High School exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase their students' engagement in learning. Teachers are given autonomy to create and implement programs that are designed to increase student engagement in learning. In 2013, the middle school team attended a summer institute and developed a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program to improve the culture of the school. Other teacher initiatives that introduced changes and more engagement opportunities include an outing club, green team (recycling), foreign language club, Interact (a Rotary-affiliated service club), and the Year-End Studies (YES) program. Most teachers have one leadership or club advisory role above and beyond the normal classroom expectations. When teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to school improvement, students' engagement in their learning is increased.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 5 Indicator 11

Conclusions

The school board, superintendent, and principal at NMHS are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. The district superintendent and the principal actively participate in school board meetings, reporting on developments within their school including policies that impact student opportunities to be successful at meeting the school's 21st century learning expectations. The principal's contributions recently included reports on changing the Global Ends policy that encompasses student education quality standards. The superintendent and principal collaborate weekly at administrative team meetings, which are attended by leaders from each school in the district, special education directors, directors of guidance, and the curriculum director. The Endicott survey reports that 55.6 percent of faculty agrees that the principal and superintendent collaborate with the board in the process of developing policies to support students in achieving the school's learning expectations. The administrative team and the school board worked collaboratively to provide 1:1 laptops for all high school students. The superintendent, principal, a board member, and two students attended the Nellie Mae conference to encourage more students to get involved in student governance. The effective collaboration among the school board, principal, and superintendent results in a clearly defined focus on the school's 21st century learning expectations and student success.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 5 Indicator 12

Conclusions

The school board and superintendent for Northfield Middle High School provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. The principal, as part of the administrative team, creates a professional development calendar and agendas for school faculty and staff. The school board and superintendent have supported this decision-making process, while allowing the principal to make both collaborative and unilateral decisions. Among other responsibilities, the school board and superintendent have granted the principal authority to set school-wide goals, manage the school's governance process, approve new courses, oversee the writing and rewriting of the student handbook and disciplinary code, conduct teacher evaluation, and manage the hiring, retention, and dismissal process for faculty and staff. The Endicott survey shows that 86.1 percent of faculty is in agreement that the principal and other school-based administrators provide instructional leadership that is consistent with the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The school's leadership model is most effective and productive when the school board and superintendent provide the principal with decision-making authority.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 5 Commendations

Commendation

The safe, positive, respectful, and supportive learning environment within the school and the strong relationships developed between all members of the school community

Commendation

The commitment of NMHS to heterogeneous grouping maximizing opportunities throughout the core curriculum

Commendation

The district's support for professional development opportunities and the dedication of staff to continuing education through these and other professional development opportunities

Commendation

The effective and varied use of the weekly faculty meeting time to review data and exchange best practices that enhance teaching and learning

Commendation

The peer-mentoring program that supports new teachers and the implementation of the Danielson model to provide an organized and comprehensive administrative evaluation process for teachers

Commendation

The school's commitment to maintaining challenging course offerings despite declining enrollment and small class sizes

Commendation

The focus of the administration's leadership on the improvement of teaching and learning as they model their commitment to the school's core values and beliefs

Commendation

The autonomy afforded to the principal as the clear leader of the school and to the teachers to sponsor significant programs that enhance the student experience and the culture and climate of the school

Commendation

The multitude of roles filled by teacher leaders in the school community to support successful co-curricular activities

Commendation

The collaborative relationship between the school board and administration that supports student achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations

Standard 5 Recommendations

Recommendation

Communicate professional development opportunities to professional staff in a timely manner

Recommendation

Collaborate with faculty and staff to plan professional development activities

Recommendation

Examine time usage to maximize teacher-student contact and student learning

Recommendation

Capitalize on existing available time to foster the professional collaboration among teachers at all levels to support the learning needs of all students

Recommendation

Increase opportunities for students and parents to have clearly defined roles in the decision-making processes at NMHS

Recommendation

Encourage teacher leadership through involvement in the decision-making process

Standard 6 Indicator 1

Conclusions

Northfield Middle High School has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, which support students in their efforts to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. Established systems are in place to ensure that students who require interventions and supports have their needs addressed in a timely manner. Students make daily connections with their teacher advisors who support students' academic, social, and emotional well-being. Teams of school staff members meet weekly to review student needs in a timely manner through teacher team meetings at the middle school level, freshman academy, and educational support teams (EST) in both the middle and high schools. The school has a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) structure in place which provides researched-based interventions to increase learning and to create a positive school environment. In addition to effectively implementing a school-wide, proactive Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) model, the school has a listing of specific Tier 1 and Tier 2 services that are commonly provided to students in need. The core members of the high school EST team include the school nurse, a school counselor, a math teacher, a PE teacher, the Student Assistance Program (SAP) counselor, and the alternative program director. The core members of the middle school EST are core content teachers and the school nurse. Additional staff members are invited to EST meetings as needed. EST teams meet weekly to discuss supports for students who have been identified as needing Tier 2 interventions. Data and MAP test results are regularly reviewed to identify students who may require intervention services. Services for individual students who require interventions within the school (including in-house counseling services), and with outside agencies (including Vocational Rehab, Youth Service Bureau, and Washington County Mental Health), are coordinated by the student's special education case manager or other support services personnel. For students receiving special education services, the district's special education director oversees the scheduling of all referral and annual meetings to ensure that they adhere to federal regulations. Case managers for individual students schedule referral meetings, support team meetings, and annual IEP meetings. There is a special education case manager to address the needs of students who are placed in alternative or therapeutic settings. For students on Section 504 Plans, meetings and services are set up by the 504 coordinator, a role currently held by the assistant principal. Students with medical plans are provided with similar supports through the school nurse. The school has crisis response teams, the Red Team and the Blue Team. These teams are prepared to take immediate action to support students facing crisis situations. Each of these teams has a slightly different purpose with the Red Team responds to events that potentially compromise school/building safety and The Blue Team responds to social/emotional/behavioral emergencies and to personal/family situations that require a more planned response that may include DCF interventions, meetings with the school's nurse and/or counselors. Northfield Middle High School's timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies provided to all students, including identified and at-risk students, ensures that the school is able to achieve its stated mission and school expectations with greater success.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- parents
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 2

Conclusions

Northfield Middle High School provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services. Information about school counseling, health, library/media, and support services for identified students are provided to families through multiple means. In the Endicott survey, 79 percent of parents agree that this information is provided and parents who were interviewed reported that they are pleased with the level of school communication. The school provides outreach by various means including printed information readily available in the school lobby, weekly announcements that are sent home, Connect Now (a text message and voicemail system), quarterly guidance newsletters, online postings to the local Front Porch Forum, published annual reports, and postings in the local print newspaper. Support services staff have taken advantage of available technology to communicate with families in addition to more traditional, face-to-face interactions. Private phone calls to parents are made when student concerns rise to the educational support team level. Parents reported that the EST teams and guidance department provided clear and effective communication on a variety of topics. The school's guidance department effectively uses technology to provide parents with a wide range of information relating to local educational opportunities, the college application process, financial aid, and available mental health and social services. Information is provided in print to parents who might not have Internet access. A comprehensive list of local mental health resources and private practice therapists is readily available outside the front office, in addition to other information to inform parents. Guidance staff also host parent information nights related to college admissions, and transition to 6th and 9th grades. Students were less knowledgeable than parents about knowing who to ask for help at school if they have a personal problem, with about 59 percent knowing who they would seek for support within the building. Special educators communicate regularly with most parents about their students, but some parents are not responsive to their requests and pose a challenge. Northfield Middle High School's effort to provide information about available student support services to families, especially to those most in need, ensures that the school is able to achieve its stated mission and school expectations with greater success.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- parents
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Support services staff frequently use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student. All staff members are provided with either a laptop or an iPad to access the variety of technological programs used to support students. The school student information system (Tyler SIS) is utilized school-wide for grading, attendance, and behavior tracking. According to teacher interviews, data housed in the Tyler SIS along with MAP data are used to help support students who may be struggling or to identify those who may require early intervention when beginning to demonstrate the need for services. Teachers frequently use email to communicate with one another and with parents on student progress and needs. The school nurse uses SNAP electronic software to track students seeking services in the nurse's office and uses this information to develop presentations to students and staff on health-related matters. iPads are utilized by special education teachers to access various programs such as Bookshare to personalize instruction for students. Special education case managers, as well as the 504 coordinator, use DocuSped to schedule meetings. DocuSped is also used to house student IEPs and evaluations. The 504 coordinator uses Outlook calendar to maintain a schedule for all 504 meetings and uses it to invite attendees. In the guidance department, the staff uses a calendar program to keep track of student appointments and group meetings. Counselors also use technology to assist students who need support when searching for and applying to college as well as to electronically request dual enrollment vouchers. The school's website offers a great deal of information to the school community on the variety of support services available to students and families. When support services personnel utilize technology to assist students and communicate with parents, student support services are more effective and efficient which ensures that student needs are met.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 6 Indicator 4

Conclusions

School counseling services at Northfield Middle High School have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who deliver a written, developmental program; meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling; engage in individual and group meetings with all students; deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers; and use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. One full-time counselor is responsible for students in grades 6-9. Additionally, he teaches a class in 21st century learning skills to middle school students. The second counselor (80 percent FTE) works with students in grades 10-12, focusing on college admission, dual enrollment, testing, and other academic needs. The developmentally appropriate guidance program is written into each student's PLP (personal learning plan). This plan leads students through a curriculum that helps students set goals and develop plans for their future. Counselors report that there are at least five student-counselor interactions and up to ten per year with every student. These interactions are achieved through group meetings, grade-level meetings, and individual meetings. However, according to the Endicott survey, 67.3 percent of students report that they do not meet with their counselor regularly and there is an equal split between students who do feel comfortable going to their counselor and those who do not. It was evident through teacher meetings that many students seek the support of the assistant principal and the school nurse for emotional needs. The counselor for grades 10-12 holds two parent college informational evenings during the school year. The counselor for the middle school holds parents meetings to assist in the transition for fifth grade students and for eighth grade students prior to their transition to the high school. Counselors frequently refer students to mental health providers from the Washington County Mental Health services. The school contracts with outside counselors to provide counseling services to students on IEP Plans who require support. The TAAP (Teacher Advisory Action Plan) is a system where teachers can refer a student to a process that gathers specific data about the student that could be used to refer the student to the educational support team (EST). The school has implemented a red/blue crisis team in order to respond to student emergency needs. Assessment data including Naviance, PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test) , MAP (Measure of Academic Achievement) Testing, YRBS (Youth Risk Behavior Survey) and VSAC (Vermont Student Assistance Program) is used to improve services and to ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. As a result of the continual reflection of the services provided, the caring and compassionate counseling staff, as well as their investment in each student's individual goals, students at NMHS are supported with their academic and social/emotional needs.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 6 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Northfield Middle High School's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who provide preventative health services and direct intervention services; use an appropriate referral process; conduct ongoing student health assessments; and use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and to ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. NMHS has a full-time nurse who serves the 300 student population. According to the self-study, the nurse is able to adequately handle the average of 50 contacts per day. The Endicott survey indicates that 72.6 percent of students feel comfortable going to the school nurse allowing her to effectively provide direct intervention services. According to teacher interviews, the school nurse is one of two people in the building whom students generally feel comfortable accessing for support with personal issues. According to the self-study, the nurse consults with school counselors, the SAP (Student Assistance Program), and other key people to determine when student needs are at the point where they need referral to outside agencies such as Planned Parenthood, local hospitals, DCF (Department for Children and Families), or Department of Health. The school nurse has been at NHMS for over 20 years and this tenure has helped her develop ongoing relationships with various health-related agencies in Central Vermont and with students and parents. Health assessments occur throughout the year and include vision screening, assessments for chronic conditions, first aid, and illness assessment. Additionally, the school nurse helps students dealing with anxiety through relaxation exercises and mindfulness. The nurse uses health information gathered at the start of the year to document immunizations, well-child care visits, screenings, and health insurance status. Using this information, health plans are developed for individual students and relevant information is disseminated to staff and families. Student visits are documented through the SNAP documentation software for health records. Based on teacher interviews, the nurse analyzes this data to see trends in health concerns. The school website has a link to the district website page detailing the available support resources in the community including health care, counseling, nutrition, and health education. The school nurse and administration uses ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community to gauge the efficacy of the school's health services. Due to the exceptional services provided by NMHS health services department and relationships established with students, families, and outside agencies, most student health concerns are addressed at NMHS in a supportive, caring, and professional environment, better allowing students to achieve their academic goals.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 6

Conclusions

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

The Northfield Middle/High School Library has one full-time school library media specialist who functions as manager, teacher, and information specialist. The librarian collaborates with teachers in order to integrate information skills into classroom curriculum, and provides a variety of resources in various formats for both research and the personal interests of students and staff. The librarian assists students in locating and using library resources, and monitors student library use and behavior. A student aide assists the school librarian by shelving books and performing other routine tasks one period per day. The librarian is actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum through a variety of means: collaborating with teachers to provide research skills instruction to complement the classroom curriculum; conducting informal faculty surveys to determine curriculum units and library needs; providing library materials and structured online pathways to support curriculum-related information needs; and engaging readers through book displays and reader's advisory. The NMHS library media facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school to meet the needs of the school community.

The Endicott survey indicates that 83 percent of certified staff, 87.5 percent of parents, and 77 percent of students surveyed believe the library provides a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum. When asked whether the library contains needed resources, 77 percent of student respondents agree that it does. The school reports that the library has over 15,000 items, including DVDs and VHS tapes, and a small collection of audiobooks. Work to gradually remove outdated materials is ongoing. The library media specialist continually assesses the offering and services of the facility using relevant data, including feedback from the school community to improve services and resources. Additional digital resources are available to provide access to over 50 databases, including over 31,000 publications, through the Vermont Online Library (VOL), as well as through an online encyclopedia. Direct links to over 5,000 topics from VOL databases are included in the library's online catalog. Additionally, the school's library is a member of Vermont's interlibrary loan system, VALS, which gives library patrons access to many additional materials through interlibrary loans. The consistent integration of library/media services across the curriculum, responsiveness to students' needs, and use of available technologies, enables the school to be successful in its goal of ensuring that students have access to informational resources to achieve the school's stated mission and learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- student shadowing
- teachers
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 7

Conclusions

The NMHS support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's stated mission and learning expectations; provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students; perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services. The Endicott survey indicated that 69 percent of staff believe that the school has an adequate staff of support services personnel for identified students in the above categories. Sixty-one percent of staff agrees that support staff personnel collaborate with other staff, and 58 percent of staff agrees that support staff personnel use assessment data to improve services. Sixty-five percent of parents agree that the support services program had an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff; however, parents expressed concerns about the amount of professional training provided to the school's instructional assistants. The school adheres to the federal and state laws regarding the identification, monitoring, and referral of student for special education services. There are a total of five special education teachers (two high school, two middle school, and one intensive needs) and one director of special services. Special educator caseloads average between 12-22 students. There are nine support staff who work in the classrooms as well as in the skills center. There is one speech and language pathologist with three support staff providing speech services. There is one reading/math specialist who provides services to Tier 2 students as an intervention program. There is one 504 coordinator who holds annual meetings for each student receiving 504 services, with additional meetings scheduled to meet individual needs. The middle and high school educational support teams (EST) meet once a week. The school has one part-time ELL teacher who is present one day per week. There are two contracted clinical counselors and one occupational therapist. Psychological testing is contracted on an as-needed basis. The school also contracts behavioral services through Washington County Mental Services (WCMHS); these services provide consultants or behavioral interventionists who support individual students. The district struggles to address the needs and challenges of students diagnosed with emotional disturbance (including developmental trauma) in an inclusive manner. A large number of students are out-placed in alternative or therapeutic educational settings. Coordinated Service Plan (CSP) meetings are held in the building by qualified staff when needed, in order to obtain services for students requiring counseling services, or in coordination with Washington County Mental Health Services. The school hosts two part-time therapists who provide counseling services to individual students. One of these counselors provides counseling services exclusively to students on Individualized Education Plans in response to their emotional needs. The support services staff conduct ongoing assessments using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services for the school community. The responsive nature of support services for identified students at Northfield Middle High School enables students to better access support and succeed in meeting the school's stated mission and learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- parents
- central office personnel
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 6 Commendations

Commendation

The responsive processes to identify and meet the needs of all students

Commendation

The proactive, school-wide Positive Behavior Intervention Support system

Commendation

The clear teacher advisory and educational support team structure for identifying struggling students in a timely manner

Commendation

The practical information provided to parents that addresses the emotional needs of identified students

Commendation

The varied methods used to communicate school information and services to families in the community

Commendation

The extensive use of technology to enhance the delivery of student support services

Commendation

The provision of technology devices to all staff members who utilize programs to support students

Commendation

The dynamic use of technology and data to inform the school community about health-related information

Commendation

The caring and supportive staff who care for the social/emotional and academic life of the student

Commendation

The responsive, school-wide, emergency plan that supports students in crisis or in need of support

The myriad health services provided to support the NMHS community

The availability and efforts of the health services department to address social, physical, and emotional needs

The inviting atmosphere of the school library

The collaboration between the librarian and classroom teachers related to curriculum support

The use of available technology within the library and school in general

The training provided to staff by an outside consultant on developmental trauma, and trauma-informed instructional practices

The school's understanding and responses to the mental health needs of its students

Standard 6 Recommendations

Recommendation

Pursue additional means of providing information to those parents and guardians of students who are most in need

Recommendation

Continue to train stakeholders on the extensive uses of the Tyler SIS program and utilize its capacity to mine data and to track student progress

Recommendation

Ensure that all students entering the school have their emotional needs met by using collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers

Recommendation

Continue to gather data from the community regarding the efficacy of health care services provided at NMHS

Recommendation

Provide sufficient training for instructional assistants and support staff

Standard 7 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The community and the district's governing body at Northfield Middle High School provides dependable funding for a wide range of school programs and services, sufficient professional and support staff, an ongoing professional development and curriculum revision, a full range of technology support, sufficient equipment, and sufficient instructional materials and supplies. The citizens of the town of Northfield are informed of the budget through informational meetings, brochures, and local reports. Annual budgets are generally passed with small increases, even though the population of students is getting smaller. Northfield Middle High School (NMHS) offers an adequate range of school programs and services. Additionally, students are able to take courses NMHS does not offer through Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative (VTVLC), Randolph Technical Career Center (RTCC), and Norwich University. The school has sufficient professional and support staff, however the special education department has had an increase in students but no increase in staff. Therefore, the caseloads have increased for special educators and support staff.

The facility supports the delivery of high quality school programs and services. Faculty and staff participate in ongoing professional development and curriculum revisions. Teachers have five early-release days (half-days for students) during which they participate in three hours of professional development in addition to the two scheduled professional development days per year. Professional development opportunities also occur after school or off-campus through classes and college courses for which the district pays. Even though most subjects have been aligned with the Common Core State Standards, transferable skills and Next Generation Science Standards have not been updated in the curriculum software (ATLAS).

NMHS has adequate funding for a full range of technology support. Staffing is adequate and NMHS has a technology coordinator, help desk technicians, and an educational technology integration specialist. During the fall budget development process, the technology department decides what equipment will be needed for the upcoming school year and budgets for those needs. The students in the high school are part of a one-to-one laptop program and the middle school students have computer labs and iPad carts available for use. The one-to-one program leases the equipment on a four-year lease at a cost of approximately \$30,000 per year.

NMHS appears to have sufficient equipment, instructional materials, and supplies in most departments. As a result of reduced budget allocations, the STAR program educators developed an innovative grant-writing curriculum as part of their service learning program. The school board and the community provide adequate funding for all curriculum revisions, programs, technology, and staff support. However, the approved funding does not always meet the immediate needs of teachers or students. Staffing levels have remained the same in the past few years, despite a sharp decrease in the number of students. These decreases have provided teachers with increased opportunities to personalize learning due to small class sizes and this was witnessed in many classrooms. As a result of the community and school board's dependable funding and support, NMHS is able to provide a wide range of school programs and services, sufficient professional and support staff, ongoing professional development and curriculum revision, a full range of technology support, sufficient equipment, instructional materials, and supplies to support teaching and learning.

Sources of Evidence

- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school board
- school website

Standard 7 Indicator 2

Conclusions

Northfield develops, plans, and funds programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant, to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment, and to keep the school clean on a daily basis. NMHS has developed a maintenance plan to repair and maintain all areas of the facility including classrooms, fields, and the gymnasium. The school has developed a ten-year plan to fund programs that ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant; to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment; and to keep the school clean on a daily basis. The maintenance director meets with the principal weekly to review the scheduled maintenance and repair orders to be completed. The plan includes upkeep of floors, grounds, and parking lots, as well as the purchase of safety equipment and necessary equipment to ensure the school is compliant with safety and accessibility regulations. The maintenance department is level-funded each year and equipment is replaced as needed within the budgeted limits. If an expensive item is needed or an emergency problem occurs, requests can be made to the administration to replace or purchase what is needed. All requests for needed repairs are submitted electronically by teachers and staff and assigned by the maintenance director to various custodial and maintenance staff. There is a daily expectation list for maintenance for the night and day shift crews. The pride and passion of the maintenance director was evident as he talked about his department. The school has two updated boilers, a new water heating system and heater/ventilators that saved \$32,000 last year alone. Half of the money saved goes back into the department where it can be invested in equipment and improvements, such as crash proof windows, safety locks and doors, and immediate supplies and needs. Sections of the building show their age but remain functional, clean, and up to date. The maintenance department is very responsive and according to teachers, when an order for repair is submitted, it is addressed immediately or by the next day. The maintenance director has a ten-year plan that is reviewed regularly and revised/updated on a five-year cycle. The outside of the building looks well-maintained. Some cement walkways are cracked, but winter conditions during the visit inhibited a full assessment of the total grounds. The school's well-developed plans and funding ensures the timely maintenance and repair of the building and school plant as it serves to support programs for student learning and engagement.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- department leaders
- school support staff

Standard 7 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The Northfield community funds and the school implements a plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology and capital improvements, however these plans may not be considered long-term. The school does have short-term plans for acquiring new laptops for the students next year, and training students and staff on the new online grading system, Tyler SIS. NMHS offers an adequate number of programs and services for a school of its size. Even though enrollment has been declining, some departments offer courses in addition to those mandated by the state and these expanded opportunities have resulted in low enrollment in some classes. In the last few years, staffing numbers and program options have largely remained unchanged even though there has been a 30 percent decrease in enrollment. To Northfield's credit, there seems to be no plans to reduce programs or staffing in light of these decreases. As a result of the school's location in the village, there is no clear plan for a more accessible physical education field or any available outside field space on school grounds although these needs are recognized. There are End Policies like literacy competence, character and life skills, and global citizenship that are clearly defined and periodically revised, but a clear strategy needs to be implemented to meet these policies. When a long-term plans are implemented, then programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, technology and capital improvement will be better addressed.

Sources of Evidence

- facility tour
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school website

Standard 7 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget, however faculty involvement is limited. In the fall of each school year, the superintendent, administrators, and the business manager meet to discuss the next year's budget. Adjustments to salaries, benefits, and health insurance premiums are discussed. The supervisory union budget is created and an assessment of the costs becomes part of the district budget. Then a decision on expenses for priority activities, initiatives, and required services are identified. After drafting the supervisory union budget, work on each school budget begins. Administrators request budget information from department leaders in the fall, except for technology requests, which are compiled at the end of the school year. After compiling budget information from department leaders, the principal and business manager then meet to discuss line item changes. Ultimately the superintendent and the principal present a draft of the proposed budget to the school board, which starts the budget approval process. During mid-autumn, the administration provides a draft budget to the board including proposed increases and reductions. In December, information provided by the Department of Taxes and the Agency of Education (AOE) are incorporated into the draft budgets and presented to the board. When the board believes the budget reasonably supports the outcomes drafted by the board's Ends Policies and within the community's means, they vote on the proposed budget in early January. The budget is presented to the town voters in February via informational meetings, brochures, and the Town Report. The voters of Northfield vote on the proposed budget at the March town meeting. Administrators and department leaders are given the responsibility of allocating and spending the major proportion of monies designated for teaching and learning purposes. Additionally, they are given updated information on the status of budget allocations throughout the school year. According to the Endicott survey, 41.7 percent of the staff agrees they have input into the development of the school budget. In the past, department leaders have been involved in the development of the budget; however, during the 2015-2016 school year, department leaders were not consulted, as most budgets were level-funded. Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget; once the teachers' input on programs, resources, supplies, and support on what they need is compiled, their department head presents it to the principal. At that point, teacher input is no longer part of the process. The superintendent and the principal adjust the proposed budget prior to board approval. They then present a draft of the final proposal to the school board for approval. Increased involvement in the budget development process and communication with all stakeholders into the development of the proposed budget will result in increased knowledge of the process and more efficient allocations to meet the school's needs.

Sources of Evidence

- panel presentation
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- school board
- Endicott survey

Standard 7 Indicator 5

Conclusions

The school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services. The building is dated, but functional and sufficient in most areas and meets the needs of the students, faculty and visitors from the community. There is sufficient space available for the implementation of PowerPoint lessons, desks wide enough for the use of laptops, and a strong Internet access band that supports technology integration in the high school. Most classrooms are spacious, but a few provide limited space for private one-on-one discussions or group work. Some classrooms have dividers to enable two classes to run simultaneously or flexibility in grouping. Science labs are up to date in terms of safety, space, and storage of equipment. The library has adequate space for printed material, and computers are available for staff and students to use. The guidance area has adequate space for the two guidance counselors and an administrative assistant so that the needs of the students at NMHS are appropriately served. The school nurse has an adequate and appropriate space to meet the needs of the NMHS students. The health office is designed for privacy, so that students are afforded space to work with the school nurse on private issues or illnesses. Students and faculty have appropriate and adequate space to store personal and educational belongings. Additionally, NMHS has made many updates and improvements to the site and facility, including upgraded facility lighting with more energy efficient and longer lasting bulbs. Carpeting in some areas has been replaced with tile and new carpeting has been installed in other areas. Eleven Uni-vents (heating and ventilation units) along with individual classroom thermostats have been installed in the building along with two updated boilers, and a new water heater. As a result of these upgrades, the school realized a savings of \$32,000 on its annual utility bill. The parking lot has been patched, coated and striped and accessibility ramps have been installed. The gym has recently been given a noticeable facelift. It has been painted and upper windows that were boarded up for almost twenty years were recently removed and architectural glass blocks have been installed to allow more natural light into the gymnasium. The ongoing focus on building maintenance, effective use of space, and the continued modernization of the facility will ensure the delivery of high quality current and future programs.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- facility tour

Standard 7 Indicator 6

Conclusions

Northfield Middle High School maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations. The self-study at NMHS clearly detailed the compliance information for local fire, health, and safety regulations and steps taken to meet compliance. Until the summer of 2016, some chemicals, including art chemicals, science chemicals and janitorial chemicals, were not stored appropriately in compliance with state regulations. The Washington South Supervisory Union received a citation and notification of penalty on July 11, 2016 from the Vermont Department of Labor due to violations regarding the lack of hazardous chemical training for employees, the improper labeling of hazardous chemicals and the lack of a Chemical Hygiene Plan. Since then, a Chemical Hygiene Plan has been developed, hazardous chemicals have been properly labeled and the staff has received a brief training on chemical hygiene. The school is handicap accessible. Fire extinguishers are located as required throughout the building and are checked on a regular basis according to state law. NMHS regularly conducts fire drills and lock down drills as required by the state of Vermont. According to the facilities manager, the school's boiler and elevator are also inspected regularly. Filters are inspected and changed on all equipment three times a year as needed and boilers are cleaned and tuned once a year during the summer break. All pumps are oiled once a year (or as needed) and parts are replaced regularly when they either fail or show signs of failure. Additionally, the custodial staff keeps a ten-year maintenance plan that gets updated regularly. NMHS maintains documentation that it is in compliance with state and federal regulations in various locations throughout the school including the custodians' office, the main office, and the central office. At the beginning of the school year, all staff complete online training modules in blood borne pathogens and other mandated protocols and this was the first school year that chemical hygiene training was included. After touring the facility and speaking with staff members, it was evident that 504 files, special education files and all other student information files are stored appropriately and securely to insure confidentiality. These efforts to maintain documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations ensures that the school provides a healthy, safe, and accessible environment for teaching and learning and community use.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- facility tour
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel

Standard 7 Indicator 7

Conclusions

All professional staff at NMHS attempt to actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school. The NMHS staff strives to provide multiple avenues of clear and effective communication with ongoing engagement opportunities for parents and families. Despite the staff's efforts, the Endicott survey indicates that 40 percent of parents have limited engagement in this communication process. A major new avenue of engagement is the online academic portal through the Tyler SIS portal. NMHS provides informal trainings and support for parents and students on how to use the Tyler SIS portal to check student grades, academic progress, and the benefits of accessing it on a regular basis. Access to Tyler SIS is available at any time, from any device with Internet access. Students are also provided time to check their current progress in Tyler SIS during teacher advisory (TA). Teachers email and call parents, the school sends Connect 5 notifications, emails weekly announcements, makes Front Porch Forum posts, and publishes quarterly newsletters. The school-wide quarterly newsletter features information and updates from all departments and programs, and includes information on school-wide academic progress, upcoming events, and strategic programming that continues to shape the school vision. The school's website includes course-specific and school-wide information. According to the Endicott survey, 54.5 percent of parents feel that NMHS is effective in engaging parents and families in their students' education. NMHS provides a variety of parent engagement nights including the Make a Difference Series, which provides an ongoing focus on proficiency-based learning and flexible pathways. Parents are encouraged to attend an open house in the fall and two scheduled days of parent-teacher conferences each year. Family engagement nights have taken place, centered on the following topics: computer coding, VSAC financial aid night for post-secondary planning, green living-fun living (composting and recycling), and outdoor leadership skills. These events engage families in learning about Vermont's transferable skills, post-secondary planning, and early college access programs. Additionally, NMHS sponsors multiple performances and events that showcase students' abilities and talents, while making connections to the community. As NMHS continues to explore new ways to contact and communicate with parents, the result will be increased partnerships between the school and families.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 7 Indicator 8

Conclusions

Northfield Middle High School develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning. Seventy-eight percent of the NMHS staff reported in the Endicott survey that the school has effective partnerships that support student learning. Northfield Middle High School consistently works to access local grant funds, build strong local partnerships, and deliver excellent programming for the Northfield community. The proximity of NMHS to Norwich University provides an important connection for NMHS students. Students can take Norwich courses through the Dual Enrollment Program, and the Early College Program allows seniors to complete their high school program as full-time college students. Norwich University also allows NMHS to access their campus for such activities as team building and program celebration days for the middle school PBIS program. Norwich University's Rotaract Club also teams up with the local Rotary chapter to work with the student-led NMHS Interact Club in implementing local, national, and international community service projects including local fundraisers and an ongoing international project with an orphanage in Tanzania. Recently, a partnership has been formed between Norwich University, Friends of the Winooski River, and NMHS to implement and share watershed activities. NMHS has established strong partnerships with a variety of local organizations, which include Rotary International, Northfield Saving Bank, The Mayo Center, the Labor Day Observance Organization, the Falls General Store, Kenyon's Local Beef, Morse Farms, and Green Mountain Girls Farm. Current projects include a food composting program with Morse Farms, "Share a Career Day" with the Mayo Center, a Farm-to-Table Program in which local farmers supply food to the school through The Green Mountain Girls Farm, and the Solid Waste Management Program provided by the NMHS Green Team at the three-day Northfield Labor Day Celebration. NMHS has a well-established partnership with the parent-run Booster Club, providing fundraising, scholarships and other support for NMHS students. Several parents serve as members of the NMHS school improvement team (SIT). The STAR program maintains close contacts and strong bonds with local businesses and organizations that support their alternative learning methods and enhance the students' authentic learning experiences. The multiple connections and partnerships between NMHS and local organizations and businesses serve to enhance the students' opportunities to make solid connections with their community and to learn outside of the conventional classroom.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- school board

Standard 7 Commendations

Commendation

The wide variety of programs, services, and technology supported by the community and school board

The preservation of staffing levels in view of enrollment trends that support teaching and individualized learning

The innovative funding methods included in specialized programs like the STAR program's innovative inclusion of grant writing as part of their service-learning curriculum

Commendation

The effective planning and funding programs that supports the maintenance and repairs to the building

The development of the ten-year maintenance plan that includes a knowledgeable vision and that will enable the efficient operation of the current building

The conscious focus on energy efficiency and other cost savings through the updating of building systems

The commitment and dedication of the maintenance department to support a clean, healthy, and functional environment

Commendation

The community's support that funds quality programs and services, facility needs, technology and capital improvements

The implementation of a long-range plan that addresses facility needs and maintenance

The outstanding support for programs and services that enhance teaching and learning in light of declining enrollment trends

Commendation

The transparent process used to develop the school's budget

The sequential budget development process that supports the school's programs and facilities

Commendation

The school site and plant that supports the delivery of high quality school programs and services

The district's and director of maintenance's clearly defined plan to maintain and upgrade the school building and site to support that supports the delivery of the quality opportunities at NMHS

Commendation

The responsive efforts to establish compliance and to maintain documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations

The implementation of a Chemical Hygiene Plan and staff training that ensures proper storage and safe handling of chemicals throughout the building

Commendation

The variety of media used to reach out to parents as partners and the myriad opportunities for authentic activities for parents to engage with the school community

The Tyler SIS portal that allows students and parents to receive up-to-date academic information

Commendation

The strong ties with Norwich University, the Rotary Club, and local businesses that are beneficial to students

The involvement of parents on the school improvement team and the boosters

The success of the STAR program and its ability to meet the needs of traditional and non-traditional students

Standard 7 Recommendations

Recommendation

Ensure adequate staffing to support the increase number of students with identified special needs

Recommendation

Pursue opportunities to expand outdoor facilities for teaching, learning, and co-curricular activities

Recommendation

Provide full support for specialized programs to address the learning needs of all students

Recommendation

Utilize available data to effectively plan for enrollment changes and staffing needs

Recommendation

Ensure adequate infrastructure to support the growing demands of technology integration for teaching and learning

Recommendation

Increase opportunities for teacher input and involvement in the budget process

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

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

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

Roster of Team Members

Chair(s)

Chair: David Sweet - Scituate High School

Assistant Chair: Mr. Christopher Mosca - Bellows Free Academy Union High School

Team Members

John Broadley - Bellows Falls Union High School

Anne Doton - Springfield High School

Jon Dugan-Henriksen - White Mountains Regional High School

Reuben Duncan - Jaffrey-Rindge Cooperative School District, SAU 47

Christine Eldred - Colchester High School

Rachid Farhat - Lynn Classical High School

Jessica Hammond - Twin Valley Middle High School

Sayre Ludlow - South Burlington High School

Sara Meigs - Milton High School

Jennifer Wigmore - Rutland High School