New England Association of School and Colleges, Inc.

Commission on Public Schools



Commission on Public Schools

Report of the Visiting Team for Manchester Essex RSD - Elementary Schools - Essex and Memorial

Essex and Manchester-by-the-Sea, MA

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School and Community Summary

School and Community Summary

Manchester Essex Regional School District serves the towns of Manchester-by-the-Sea and Essex, Massachusetts. These two seaside towns are rich in history and natural resources. They are roughly 25 miles north of Boston, Massachusetts, and approximately six miles south of Gloucester, Massachusetts.

With a combined population of 9,060 in 2022, the communities are racially, culturally, and ethnically similar. Ninety-six percent of the residents are white, 0.5 percent are Asian, 2 percent are multiracial, and 1.5 percent are other. The combined median household income was $171,302, with $209,052 in Manchester and $133,533 in Essex, and 5.6 percent of the residents live below the poverty line. Ninety-seven percent of the student population at the two schools are native English speakers, and 0.65 percent of students receive ELL services. Low-income students comprise 13.4 percent of students, with 18.1 percent of students with disabilities, 20.5 percent at Manchester Memorial, and 15.7 percent at Essex Elementary. The total population with high needs is 28.3 percent for the two schools combined.

The district has four schools that are housed in three school buildings. Manchester Essex Regional Middle High School houses the middle school with 274 students and the high school with 400 students)to serve grades 6-8 and 9-12, respectively. Essex Elementary School has a population of roughly 229 students in grades K-5. Manchester Memorial Elementary School has a population of approximately 297 students in grades pre-K-5. Students are assigned to the elementary school in the town in which they reside by default. Manchester Memorial Elementary School houses four district programs that serve children from both towns: MERSD Integrated pre-K, MERSD Social and Academic Integrated Learning (SAIL) program, MERSD Intensive Reading and Written Language (IRWL) program, and a MERSD Severe Special Needs Program. Essex Elementary School houses the MERSD Academic and Communication Enhancement (ACE) and MERSD Multi-Language Learners (MLL) programs. Students can qualify for these programs through the individualized education program (IEP) process regardless of their town of residence. Manchester is home to one independent school, Brookwood School, and one special education school, Landmark School. The district participates in the school choice program, admitting students from neighboring towns to selective grades based on enrollment.

Enrollment at all four district schools has remained relatively stable over the past five years. However, budgets have gotten tighter over the years, leading to considerable shared staff between the two elementary schools and increasing class sizes in certain grades/schools. The district per pupil expenditure in 2022 was $23,457.12, slightly higher than the state average of $20,133.67.

Student attendance at the two schools is 95 percent, with the average student missing 5.7 days between 2023 and 2024. The teacher attendance in 2023-2024 was 94.4 percent across both schools.

Students at both elementary schools enjoy various educational opportunities within the local Cape Ann community. The area is rich in environmental resources and has a long history. Students participate in field trips to various outdoor locations, including the Gloucester, Manchester, and Essex waterfront areas. Students enjoy hands-on, authentic learning experiences at local historical places, including the Essex Shipbuilding Museum, the Manchester Historical Society, and venues in Salem, Boston, and other surrounding cities and towns. Community connections are a strength of both schools, with students regularly interacting with local government, police, and fire staff. The schools are supported by several local non-profits, including Beverly Bootstraps, The Open Door Food Pantry, Spaulding Education Foundation, Friends of Manchester Essex Performing Arts, etc. District elementary schools have a strong partnership with Endicott College and Salem State University as hosts for student teachers, internships, and fellowships.

Students are recognized for their talents and accomplishments through art shows, musical performances, and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Both schools have school-wide and classroom charters developed by staff and students to establish how members of the school community want to feel while they are at school. Common expectations for behavior and character are established through each school's core values, and students are recognized when they demonstrate strong examples of the core values.

Core Values, Beliefs, and Vision of the Graduate

Manchester-Essex Regional School District (MERSD) Vision of a Graduate

Empathetic Global Citizen

- Understands and accepts different cultures and beliefs
- Seeks out and participates in authentic cultural experiences
- Participates in meaningful community service
- Demonstrates an awareness of current events
- Recognizes cause and effect within a variety of global networks
- Understands the importance of acting as a responsible citizen

Responsible Collaborator

- Acknowledges and respects the perspective of others
- Active and equitable participation in group settings
- Seeks appropriate resources to carry out responsibility as part of a group
- Can identify and work towards a common goal
- Advocates for ideas while resolving conflict within a group

Critical Thinker

- Recognizes and questions implicit/explicit bias
- Evaluates ideas, information, and sources for validity, relevance, and impact
- Reasons and weighs evidence from multiple perspectives to reach conclusions
- Recognizes patterns and can make inferences
- Draws appropriate conclusions
- Considers multiple perspectives

Effective Communicator

- Mindful of audience interpretation
- Demonstrates responsible digital communication
- Expresses ideas in a purposeful and confident manner both verbally and in writing
- Writes and speaks clearly for a variety of audiences and purposes
- Employs active listening
- Acknowledges multiple perspectives
- Sustains and advances the conversation
- Able to present to a variety of audiences

Personally Accountable

- Mindful of audience interpretation

- Accountable for own words and actions
- Practices academic integrity
- Practices self-care skills
- Overcomes academic and personal barriers to meet personal goals
- Maintains work/life balance

Social/Emotional Awareness

- Demonstrates empathy
- Expresses emotions in a meaningful way

Innovative and Creative

- Demonstrates open-ended thought
- Takes risks
- Demonstrates curiosity
- Demonstrates habits of mind that identify the requisite skills and knowledge needed to solve a complex problem.
- When faced with a problem, recognize and understand failures and seeks alternate solutions independently

Essex Elementary School Core Values

Respect

Responsibility

Achievement

Caring

Honesty

Manchester Memorial Elementary School Core Values

Honesty

Effort

Appreciation

Respect and Responsibility

Thoughtfulness

LEARNING CULTURE

Learning Culture

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

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

STUDENT LEARNING

Student Learning

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

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

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

Professional Practices

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

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

LEARNING SUPPORT

Learning Support

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

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

LEARNING RESOURCES

Learning Resources

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

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

Introduction

Introduction

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

The governing body of the Association is its Board of Trustees, which supervises the work of three Commissions: the Commission on Independent Schools (CIS); the Commission on Public Schools (CPS), and the Commission on International Education (CIE).

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

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

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Reflection

Accreditation coordinators and a steering committee composed of professional staff were appointed to supervise the schools' self-reflection and Accreditation process. A steering committee, including the two principals, supervised all aspects of the Accreditation process. The steering committee organized an appropriate committee or committees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people by completing the schools' self-reflection.

Public schools evaluated by the Commission on Public Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their alignment with the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the schools' core values, beliefs, vision of the graduate, and unique student population. The schools used questionnaires developed by the Commission on Public Schools to reflect the concepts in the Standards for Accreditation. These materials provided discussion items for a comprehensive assessment of the schools by the professional staff during the self-reflection.

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Team

A visiting team of five members was assigned by the Commission on Public Schools to conduct a Collaborative Conference visit to Manchester Essex Regional School District in Manchester-by-the-Sea and Essex, Massachusetts. The visiting team members spent two days conducting the visit; reviewed the self-reflection documents, which had been prepared for their examination; met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students, and parents; and observed classes to determine the degree to which the schools

align with the Commission on Public Schools' Standards for Accreditation. The team also reviewed the proposed priority areas for the schools' growth plan to be developed as part of the Accreditation process.

Each conclusion in the report was agreed upon by visiting team consensus. Sources of evidence for each conclusion drawn by the visiting team are included in each report section. The report consists of commendations and recommendations that, in the visiting team's judgment, will be helpful to the schools to improve teaching and learning and implement the plan for growth and improvement.

The visiting team's report will be forwarded to the Commission on Public Schools, which will decide on the schools' accreditation.

Foundational Element Ratings

Foundational Element Ratings

Foundational Elements	School's Rating	Visitors' Rating
1.1a - Learning Culture	Meets	Meets
1.2a - Learning Culture	Does Not Meet	Does Not Meet
2.2a - Student Learning	Does Not Meet	Does Not Meet
3.1a - Professional Practices	Meets	Meets
3.6a - Professional Practices	N/A	N/A
4.1a - Learning Support	Meets	Meets
5.1a - Learning Resources	Does Not Meet	Meets
5.5a - Learning Resources	Meets	Meets

Foundational Element 1.1a - Learning Culture

Narrative

The school community consistently and conscientiously provides a socially and emotionally safe environment for students and adults. A noticeable sense of community defines the culture of the two schools. Students feel safe asking for help and taking risks in the classroom. Students can identify at least one trusted adult in the schools and are confident that teachers and staff will respond to their needs. The school community builds and maintains a safe and emotionally responsive environment for learners and adults by integrating social-emotional learning opportunities through approaches including RULER and Responsive Classroom and the Second Step program throughout the schools. Classroom charters, prominently displayed across the schools, help students identify how they want to feel in school and are consistently used to promote feelings such as belonging, caring, respect, and kindness. Individual students are well-known by staff, and the level of personalization afforded by each school's small size helps maintain socially, emotionally, and intellectually safe learning environments. The schools create policies and protocols that define and support respectful treatment of all members of the school community and consider the experiences of historically marginalized communities. The student and family handbook outlines learner responsibilities and the core values for both schools, which include respect and responsibility.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 1.2a - Learning Culture

Narrative

There are written documents that identify the two schools' core values and define a vision of the graduate, including the attainment of transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for future success. However, the document hasyet todescribe the beliefs about learning held at the two elementary schools. At this time, the vision of the graduate is primarily seen as a high school document, as much of the work of creating the district document began with work at the high school. The district is just beginning to consider ways to integrate the components of the vision of the graduate into the elementary curriculum. The core values are well-established in the school community and are prominently displayed in the schools. The core values at the two schools vary slightly; however, many of the same concepts, including honesty, respect, and responsibility, are represented across the two schools and reflect important values of the communities.

Rating

Does Not Meet the Standard

Foundational Element 2.2a - Student Learning

Narrative

The schools have yet to have a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses and grade levels across the district. The district has begun treating consistent curriculum documents through a collaborative process that resulted in a curriculum overview for each grade level (K-5) designed to be shared with parents and families. All core academics and special areas of instruction are included in the curriculum guides. The guides describe expectations and learning outcomes delineated for each trimester. The guides include units of study with guiding/essential questions, objectives, and expectations. The format is parent-friendly, with colorful graphics and a consistent organization and design across grade levels. The guides encourage families to discuss learning at home by outlining questions caregivers can ask their children and topics parents can discuss with their child's teacher. When the school has a clearly written and implemented curriculum that includes instructional strategies and assessment practices and integrates the vision of the graduate, consistency in expectations across the two school sites and between classes at a grade level will be enhanced, and learners will benefit from planned, guaranteed learning experiences.

Rating

Does Not Meet the Standard

Foundational Element 3.1a - Professional Practices

Narrative

Each school has a current school improvement/growth plan created and regularly updated by its school council. The plans are approved by the school committee each year. Each plan contains school-specific, measurable goals, is based on priority areas of growth, and is aligned with the district's strategic plan. The school improvement plans are used to inform decision-making in all areas of the schools, including the focus on social-emotional learning, cross-district collaboration, and the continued development of an authentic, student-centered learning environment.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 3.6a - Professional Practices

Narrative

N/A The schools do not have career and technical education programs.

Foundational Element 4.1a - Learning Support

Narrative

The schools have a wide range of intervention strategies designed to support learners. The schools use formal and informal processes to identify and refer students needing academic and social-emotional assistance. The schools' Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) teams assess students three times per year using universal screening in reading and mathematics. Each school's team meets to review the data on student performance and uses benchmark scores to identify students who will enter a formal tiered system of support. In addition to the MTSS process, teachers or families can seek additional support via the teacher assistance team (TAT) for non-academic concerns such as social-emotional needs, organizational skills, and speech/language skills. Many students receive intervention services from their general education teacher or interventionists directly in their classrooms. An extensive range of intervention strategies are provided to students through specialized programs for students with specific identified needs through the districtwide ACE, SAIL, IRWL, and RISE programs. School staff are dedicated to providing intentional intervention services and strategies to meet the needs of all students.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 5.1a - Learning Resources

Narrative

The school sites generally support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services. Both buildings have adequate classrooms and dedicated spaces for specialized instruction, such as art, music, and physical education. The buildings are clean and well-maintained. There are spaces for occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language services, counseling, school psychologists, and special education programs. The two schools are markedly different in age. Manchester Memorial Elementary School was built four years ago, and Essex Elementary School was built in 1957 and last renovated in 1975, nearly fifty years ago. The schools comply with local fire, health, and safety regulations. The district is committed to ensuring an equitable experience for students at each school. A district stabilization fund has been used to promote parity across the buildings, so, for example, when technology was upgraded at Manchester Memorial as part of its construction project, the district upgraded the technology at Essex, including devices, network upgrades, and installation of Promethean Boards. Essex Elementary School has several issues with its facility, which are well-documented in the 2023 facility needs assessment. For example, safety concerns, such as uneven surfaces at door thresholds, pose a tripping hazard. Some current codes are not being met, such as inadequate building envelope insulation. Many mechanical systems are outdated and would significantly interrupt school operations if they fail. The school has limited flexible grouping options and spaces that support collaborative learning. The school district applied for Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) support to renovate or rebuild Essex Elementary to ensure that all district students benefit from attending modern schools that support contemporary education.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 5.5a - Learning Resources

Narrative

The school conscientiously provides a physically safe environment for students and adults. The schools maintain an infrastructure designed to support a physically safe environment. Visitors must be screened on camera before entering and report to the office. This fall, Raptor Technologies Visitor Management software was piloted and now has been purchased for all district schools. The exterior doors are locked. The school implemented emergency panic buttons and a protocol for their use, which sends an alert to police/fire/emergency medical services. The schools have safety policies, processes, and protocols for students and adults. The school district created and regularly updates a comprehensive School Safety Procedures Handbook for administration, faculty, staff, and students. This document reflects current expectations and protocols for various emergencies, including weather, major medical, lockdowns, and shelter-in-place. The school district uses the Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate (ALICE) protocol to practice response to building intruders. The school completes regular fire and lockdown drills with the cooperation of local police and fire personnel. Due to the school district's and community personnel's dedicated efforts, students and staff benefit from a safe school environment.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Standard 1 - Learning Culture

Principle 1 .1 - The school community provides a safe, positive, respectful, and inclusive culture that demonstrates a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- The school community extensively builds and maintains a socially, emotionally, and intellectually safe environment for students and adults by implementing RULER and Responsive Classroom practices into daily classroom and school activities.
- Students and families are confident that staff take a comprehensive approach to helping students with social-emotional needs.
- Students feel known and cared for by faculty members and administrators, highlighting the importance of these relationships in their educational experience.
- The schools emphasize the understanding of and commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging through professional development for staff.
- The school libraries incorporate "Worldly Literature" as "windows" for readers to learn about different cultures, experiences, historically marginalized groups, and diverse historical figures.
- The schools maintain a vigilant approach to addressing any issues related to bullying, misbehavior, and students in need by creating a proactive support system through MTSS, TAT, and close collaboration with school adjustment counselors and support staff.
- Students understand and demonstrate empathy towards learning differences and the programs and interventions available to support all learners.

Principle 1.2 - The school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate drive student learning, professional practices, learning supports, and the provision and allocation of learning resources.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- All staff members have been introduced to the district vision of the graduate, and efforts are underway to align the district and school's vision, demonstrating a commitment to cohesive educational objectives.
- The core values are reflected in the culture of the schools, for example, students and adults purposefully collaborate in creating classroom charters that guide expectations for respectful interactions throughout the school.

Principle 1.3 - The school community takes collective responsibility for the wellbeing of every student and can demonstrate how each student is known, valued, and connected to the school community.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- The school communities actively embrace collective responsibility for the well-being of each student.
- The school communities honor individuality among all learners and actively promote acceptance of differences in learning approaches and needs.
- The schools provide many students with opportunities to engage in extracurricular enrichment activities, including creative writing, STEM, and multiple performing arts opportunities.
- The school communities frequently create opportunities for students to connect with adults and peers to support their social, emotional, and physical well-being through mentorship with homeroom teachers, school adjustment counselors, and support staff.

Principle 1.4 - The professional staff commits to continuous improvement through research, collaborative learning, innovation, and reflection.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- The professional staff employs a strong willingness to collaborate on best practices and see each other as learning resources.
- The professional staff commits to research-based instruction and reflective practice through professional book studies on topics such as structured literacy,*Building Thinking Classrooms*, and cultural competency.
- The school improvement council analyzes student achievement, school culture, and school finances to develop targeted goals to improve the school.
- The district professional development committee meets monthly to plan professional learning opportunities for staff.
- Through staff charters and established meeting norms, the professional staff creates the conditions and trust necessary to foster collaboration and the sharing of innovative practices.

Principle 1.5 - The school's culture promotes intellectual risktaking and personal and professional growth for educators and learners.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- The schoolculture actively encourages intellectual risk-taking and values personal and professional growth by providing two professional development days for teachers to engage in professional learning outside the school district.
- The school culture consistently emphasizes a growth mindset by displaying posters, bulletin boards, and visual reminders throughout all learning spaces.
- Students can redo and revise work, particularly in writing instruction and open-ended responses in mathematics.
- The school culture promotes a shared sense of agency and responsibility among educators and staff by incorporating reflective practices in student learning and assessments.
- The professional staff engages in continuous professional growth by selecting a professional development pathway to grow their practice toward the schools' common goals.
- The professional staff promotes respectful discourse, collaboration, and a disposition to listen well and learn from others by setting norms for staff meetings.

Principle 1.6 - The school has an inclusive leadership model reflecting the school community.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- The schools embrace an inclusive definition of leadership, granting authority and responsibility to school leaders to enhance student learning.
- Department specialists feel trusted and supported in their new roles, benefiting from positive relationships with staff and building leaders.
- The school improvement council includes representation of administrative, educator, and family stakeholders and works collaboratively to align school goals with district-level strategic goals.
- The principals are supported by the superintendent and school committee.
- Parents are confident in the principals' effectiveness and value the positive partnership between the principals and all other stakeholders.
- The principals, superintendent, and school committee are collaborative, reflective, constructive, and aligned, reinforcing a collaborative leadership approach.
- The principals have the appropriate decision-making authority to lead the school, including bringing forward new initiatives and leading school improvement efforts based on staff input.
- School leaders emphasize time for teacher collaboration and reflectiveness in alignment with school goals through professional development time on extended days on Wednesdays.
- Some students have leadership opportunities through the student leadership council/student ambassador programs.

Principle 1.7 - The school culture fosters civic and community engagement.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- The schools incorporate texts with diverse perspectives and characters to encourage social awareness and understanding of local, national, and global perspectives.
- The school culture supports learning experiences that impact the surrounding community by organizing student-led participation in toy drives, Socktober, food drives, kindness initiatives, and oversight of recycling, gardening, and composting programs.
- The school culture fosters a connection to the community beyond the school campus by giving students opportunities to visit important places in the community on field trips.
- Students in grades 3-5 engage in an Understanding Our Differences activity each year to support a school community of awareness and acceptance.
- Grade 5 students participate in civic opportunities such as student leadership council/student ambassadors and coordinate food, toy, and clothing drives to support their local community.

Future Areas of Growth In this Standard include:

- Ensure beliefs about learning are developed
- Ensure the core values, beliefs about learning, and the vision of the graduate are actively reflected in the school culture, guide policies, procedures, and resource allocations, and include the school's commitments to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging
- Increase the opportunities for students from the two schools to participate in common enrichment and team-building experiences

Sources of Evidence

- central office personnel
- classroom observations
- community members
- department leaders
- parents
- school leadership
- school support staff
- students
- teachers

Standard 2 - Student Learning

Principle 2.1 - The school's vision of the graduate is defined by measurable criteria and learners receive feedback on their progress toward proficiency.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- The schools sometimes embed the vision into curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices.

Principle 2.2 - There is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills and integrates the school's vision of the graduate.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- The schools have written curriculum guides for K-5 that are provided to families to enhance family involvement in student learning.
- All core academics and special areas of instruction are included in the curriculum guides.
- The guides describe expectations and learning outcomes delineated for each trimester.
- The guides include units of study with guiding/essential questions, objectives, and expectations.
- The format is parent-friendly, with colorful graphics and a consistent organization and design across grade levels.
- The parent-facing curriculum guides provide detailed information on student expectations by trimester and detail critical information about the content and skills taught in each grade level; the school fosters home-school communication about learning by providing sample questions that families can ask their children about what is happening in school.

Principle 2.3 - The written curriculum emphasizes deep understanding, through aspects such as interdisciplinary learning, project-based learning, and authentic learning experiences.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- The schools have engaged in conversation to define authentic learning experiences across the district.
- The schools support making connections across disciplines by incorporating technology into all disciplines.
- The schools support opportunities for real-world connections facilitated through community partnerships, including the use of outside speakers from the local Audubon Society and the Plimoth Patuxet Museums.
- Cross-curricular units are planned and implemented by integrating language arts, science, and social studies across departments in the Wonders Reading program.
- The Everyday Math program provides opportunities for real-life application through daily calendar routines, graphing, and number stories.

Principle 2.4 - Instructional practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- Student centered strategies are emphasized, such as providing students with choices in how to demonstrate their learning.
- The 1:1 technology initiative allows teachers to routinely use technology as a tool to provide targeted learning opportunities for students, so they can access different tools and programs to meet their own needs.
- Tiered intervention strategies are consistently implemented, with interventions provided by classroom teachers, interventionists, and special educators.
- Intervention services for students are often provided within the general education classroom, increasing inclusion of students with learning differences.
- The schools purposefully provide structure and support to all learners, actively teaching students about a variety of tools/templates and encouraging to select what they need.

Principle 2.5 - Students are active learners who have opportunities to lead their learning.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- Educators regularly create opportunities for students to be active learners who have opportunities to lead their learning, often through choices in materials and in ways to demonstrate their learning.
- Students are routinely given choice in topics for writing and research.
- Many teachers offer opportunities for students to begin the day with a "soft start", using Brain Bins to try out new challenges.
- Students' personal interests and opportunities for creative expression are often supported, such as giving opportunities for students who play the piano to play for the school in the foyer or to join the rock band or chorus.
- Students have regular opportunities to set goals and reflect upon the results.

Principle 2.6 - Learners regularly engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- The schools provide monthly STEM challenges to students beginning in kindergarten.
- Students in grades one through four learn coding in technology class, engage in problem-solving, and reflect on the relationships between their commands and the outcomes.
- The science curriculum in grades three through five allows students to engage in inquiry and problem-solving while carrying out labs and investigations using the scientific method and the engineering design process.

Principle 2.7 - Learners experience a wide range of assessment practices to support and improve learning.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- The school uses a wide range of assessment practices to support and improve learning, including formative and summative assessments, universal screening, end-of-unit tests, projects, and presentations.
- The school employs iReady Diagnostic Assessments three times per year to measure student skills in reading and mathematics.
- Progress monitoring strategies are in place for students with individualized education programs (IEPs) and for students in intervention groups.
- Teachers use informal assessments, such as turn-and-talk, think-pair-share, and exit tickets, to monitor learning and adjust instruction daily.
- Teachers use assessment data and classroom observations to determine the need for reteaching of important skills and concepts.

Principle 2.8 - Learners have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning, receive corrective feedback, and use this feedback in meaningful ways to support their learning.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- Learners have frequent opportunities to share their work orally and in written formats.
- Students have opportunities and time necessary to revise and improve their work.
- In many classrooms, teachers post learning objectives and give students feedback using the language of the objective.
- In grades three through five, teachers use the Google Classroom feedback feature, which allows them to provide feedback on assignments and for students to respond to the feedback.

Principle 2.9 - Learners use technology across all curricular areas to support, enhance, and demonstrate their learning.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- A 1:1 technology initiative provides all K-2 students with an iPad and all students in grades 3-5 with a Chromebook.
- Learners regularly uses technology to support, enhance, and demonstrate learning, using various subscription services and learning management systems to provide teachers and students access to technology-based resources throughout the school day.
- In many classrooms, students use Google Classroom to access documents and videos, and organized ways in which students are grouped into flexible groups.
- Technology is used consistently to personalize the pace of learning, giving some students additional time to practice skills and others the opportunity to explore additional aspects of a topic.
- In upper grades, teachers use Google Classroom to provide students with a list of what they need to “get ready,” “do,” and what to do when they are done.
- Learners have frequent opportunities to collaborate digitally to support learning, including using shared documents to comment on peers' writing pieces and give suggestions to develop their writing.

Future Areas of Growth In this Standard include:

- Develop and implement a plan to define what proficiency looks like for each aspect within the vision of a graduate with specific and measurable criteria for success and integrate opportunities for students to practice the skills within the vision of the graduate and receive feedback on their progress throughout the curriculum
- Develop and implement a formal process to assess and communicate each individual learner's progress toward achieving the school's vision of the graduate to learners and their families and an annual report on whole-school progress
- Complete the written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all disciplines that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, instructional strategies, assessment practices, and integrates the school's vision of the graduate
- Increase consistent use of best practices that allow students to lead their learning and have meaningful, relevant, and self-initiated learning experiences
- Ensure all students have access to learning experiences that are challenging and require higher order thinking and problem-solving skills
- Develop common expectations for providing feedback to learners across grade levels and subject areas

Sources of Evidence

- central office personnel
- classroom observations
- department leaders
- parents
- school leadership
- school support staff
- student work
- students
- teacher interview
- teachers

Standard 3 - Professional Practices

Principle 3.1 - The school engages all stakeholders in the development and implementation of a school growth/improvement plan, which reflects the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- The school regularly engages all stakeholders in the development and implementation of a school improvement plan that is aligned with the district plan and strategic priorities.
- The school benefits from the perspectives of stakeholders on the school council, which helps it make informed decisions about the school improvement growth plan.
- The school has developed school-specific and measurable goals, and school improvement plan progress reports are generated annually to ensure that plans are effectively implemented in a timely manner.

Principle 3.2 - Educators engage in ongoing reflection, formal and informal collaboration, and professional development.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- The schools provide dedicated time for collaborative meetings, and most educators routinely have time allocated to collaborate with colleagues.
- Educators are involved in many opportunities for within-school and cross-district collaboration, including the district committee that plans professional development, grade-level meetings, building-based leadership council activities, curriculum leadership team meetings, professional book studies, and mentor-mentee meetings.
- Educators engage in authentic professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching to increase student learning by using the TeachPoint tool for goal setting and reflection and to submit evidence related to their professional learning and student learning goals.
- The schools have identified transparent classrooms to encourage peer visitation and observations.
- Teachers frequently share instructional strategies during building-based staff meetings.
- Educators have used the curriculum mapping process to reflect on the effectiveness of programming, alignment of units to state standards, and the instructional practices used in curriculum implementation.

Principle 3.3 - Educators examine evidence of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, and programs and services.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- Educators, individually and collaboratively, analyze formal and informal student performance data and work from a variety of formative and summative assessments, including iReady Diagnostic Assessments and the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS).
- Educators analyze data to identify and respond to inequities in student learning to form MTSS intervention groups and instructional groups in the classrooms.
- Educators have conversations to discuss student growth and learning and recommend students of concern to the TAT/child study process.

Principle 3.4 - Collaborative structures and processes support coordination and implementation of curriculum.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- The schools are beginning to implement structures and processes to ensure a formal, ongoing curriculum review and revision cycle for all courses in all academic areas by creating common family curriculum guides across grade levels.
- Curriculum leaders are examining the horizontal and vertical articulation of curriculum across the district.
- The district has provided leadership and dedicated time to support the coordination and implementation of the curriculum.

Principle 3.5 - School-wide organizational practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- The schools provide inclusive learning environments and opportunities for students to learn with and from students who are different from them.
- The schools provide a strong system of tiered support to meet the needs of students who need additional support to meet grade level standards.
- The schools use the Understanding Our Differences educational program for grades 3-5 to foster understanding of students with a range of differences, including physical disabilities and autism.

Principle 3.6 - Educators develop productive student, family, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support learning.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- Educators enable and promote relationships with the community, businesses, and higher education institutions to support authentic learning experiences by partnering with local organizations, public service agencies, and local non-profit organizations to offer field trips and other learning opportunities.
- Educators engage students and families as partners in each learner's education and reach out specifically to those families who are less connected to offer connections to available resources, such as the Open Door Food Pantry.
- Educators and learning support teachers connect with families by sharing family newsletters that offer resources to families.

Future Areas of Growth In this Standard include:

- Develop consistent practices for scoring and grading teacher-developed and program-related assessments
- Provide dedicated time to analyze student work samples across and between grade levels within a school site and across the district
- Identify collaboration times for teachers traveling between schools to meet with colleagues

Sources of Evidence

- central office personnel
- community members
- parents
- school leadership
- self-reflection
- teachers

Standard 4 - Learning Support

Principle 4.1 - All students receive appropriate intervention strategies to support their academic, social, and emotional success.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- The schools consistently provide a range of timely, coordinated, and directive academic intervention strategies for all students that support each student's success and well-being.
- The schools have well-established and flexible programs to meet the specific learning needs of individual students through the ACE, SAIL, RISE, and IRWL programs.
- The schools provide a formal tiered system of support for students through the MTSS process and the teacher assistance team (TAT).
- The schools have a child study process when significant concerns are brought forth, which can lead to more formal evaluation through a referral to special education.
- The schools provide a formal, defined process to identify and refer students who need additional assistance by collecting data through universal screeners three times per year and analyzing that data with the MTSS team.
- Collaborative efforts among teachers and various student progress monitoring groups help assess intervention effectiveness.
- The schools provide outreach to families about available support services, especially to those most in need, in a variety of ways, including weekly newsletters and the presence of adjustment counselors at dismissal times and school-wide events to facilitate informal parent contact and communication.
- Teachers regularly communicate with families when student concerns arise, and intervention is needed.
- The schools have intervention strategies designed to support learners through tiered support and small-group instruction provided by classroom teachers and interventionists.
- The schools use multiple social-emotional curricula, including RULER, Second Step, Understanding Our Differences, Social Thinking, and Zones of Regulation.

Principle 4.2 - All students receive counseling services that meet their personal, social, emotional, academic, career, and college counseling needs from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- Counseling services include adequate, certified/licensed personnel and support staff to deliver effective services to students through each school's adjustment counselor and school psychologist.
- The schools have established a written developmental program that includes RULER, Second Step, Social Thinking, and Zones of Regulation.
- Counseling services include regular meetings with students to provide personal, social, emotional, and academic counseling.
- All students have access to the school adjustment counselors when needed.
- Teachers and families can request help from the teacher assistance team, where the adjustment counselors serve as the case managers.
- School counseling services include continuous collaboration with community and area mental health agencies and social service providers.

- Adjustment counselors frequently communicate with families and community partners to successfully transfer students to outside service providers.
- Adjustment counselors collaborate with the middle school adjustment counselor to ensure students have a smooth transition to middle school.

Principle 4.3 - All students receive health services that ensure their physical and emotional well-being from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- School health services have adequate, certified/licensed personnel and support staff to deliver appropriate health services to students via registered nurses.
- The schools fall below the state-recommended ratio of one nurse to 750 students.
- School health services include preventative health services and direct intervention services, such as vision, hearing, postural, and body mass index (BMI) screenings.
- School health services ensure the use of an appropriate referral process through communication with families for doctor referrals and follow-up with families after appointments to keep student records current.
- Nurses frequently collaborate with teachers and adjustment counselors for students with individualized health care plans, including making slide show presentations for teachers on what to look for in student symptoms related to particular student health needs, such as diabetes.
- The schools partner with the Lion's Club for vision screenings, can schedule optometrist appointments within a week, and help families access free glasses for students in need.

Principle 4.4 - All students receive library/information services that support their learning from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- The two schools share a library media specialist and an instructional technology teacher.
- The library media specialist and the instructional technology teacher are actively engaged in the implementation of the curriculum and instructional practices at both schools and support teachers in enhancing student learning by regularly updating the library based on curriculum needs, fulfilling staff book requests, and creating curated book lists based on SEL and DEI awareness.
- The libraries partner with the area public library to provide books unavailable in the school libraries.
- The library media specialist and the instructional technology teacher provide professional support to classroom teachers to ensure high-quality instruction on information literacy, research techniques, citing sources, and accessing literature from a variety of genres through collaboration on grade-level research projects in each grade, and providing book bundles to partner with classroom units.
- The library media specialist and the instructional technology teacher are responsive to students' interests and needs to support independent reading and lifelong learning by working independently with students to support their learning in the classroom.
- The library media specialist and the instructional technology teacher assist students in becoming active learners who have opportunities to lead their learning through independent, year-long research projects that are presented to classes at the end of the year.
- The library media centers have up-to-date technology, materials, supplies, and furnishings, such as 20 iPads, 20 Chromebooks, a Promethean Board, desktop computers, and a chill zone.

- The library media centers have a collection that supports the curriculum and is reflective of the diversity of the student body, including a Worldly Books section and books on the topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion, social-emotional learning, growth mindset collections, as well as audio and digital collections.
- The library media centers have physical settings that encourage collaboration among students, opportunities for inquiry, and authentic learning, including the chill zone, portable technology for flexible seating, exploratory activities, and access to the library database.
- The library media centers are open and available for students and adults before, during, and after school and open to classrooms to use when the library is free.

Principle 4.5 - English language learners and students with special needs and 504 plans receive appropriate programs and services that support their learning from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- Support services have extensive, certified/licensed personnel and support staff to meet students' needs, including special education teachers, adjustment counselors, school psychologists, English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), speech and language pathologist (SLPs), occupational therapists (OTs), registered behavior technicians (RBTs), reading specialists, and interventionists.
- School counseling services include regular meetings with students to provide personal, social, emotional, and academic counseling in alignment with t IEPs and 504s.
- Support services include collaboration among all educators, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff to meet each student's goals by having daily/weekly/monthly consults and meetings to discuss student progress and next steps.
- ESL teachers build strong relationships with families and provide guidance and resources, collaborating with teachers on student goals, translation technology, and providing translation services for conferences and meetings.
- Support services include appropriate and challenging educational experiences through specialized programs designed to meet individual student needs, such as the ACE, SAIL, RISE, and IRWL programs.
- The school provides challenging educational experiences through accommodations and modifications so all students, including special education and multi-lingual learners (MLL), can access the curriculum.
- Support services provide inclusive learning opportunities and instruction through co-teaching in general education classrooms, differentiation in classrooms, pushing in to provide targeted support, and including all students in social-emotional learning, such as RULER and Understanding Our Differences.

Future Areas of Growth In this Standard include:

- Implement opportunities for students to explore and identify career aptitudes and interests

Sources of Evidence

- central office personnel
- classroom observations
- community members
- parents
- school leadership
- school support staff

- self-reflection
- students
- teachers

Standard 5 - Learning Resources

Principle 5.1 - The community and district provide school buildings and facilities that support the delivery of high-quality curriculum, programs, and services.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- The schools are clean and well-maintained, as custodians clean the school during the day and in evening shifts.
- Manchester Memorial Elementary School is a new school that fully supports the delivery of high-quality curriculum, programs, and services.
- Manchester Memorial has new mechanical systems, including new heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems for climate control and air circulation.
- Both schools are adequately sized for the school community.
- The schools meet all applicable federal and state laws and comply with local fire, health, and safety regulations.
- The district completed a comprehensive facility needs assessment to document the strengths and needs of the district's four schools.
- The district is actively pursuing a renovation or rebuild of Essex Elementary School to provide a modern facility that meets the demands of contemporary education.

Principle 5.2 - The community and the district's governing body provide time to enable research-based instruction, professional growth, and the development, implementation, and improvement of school programs and services.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- The district provides professional learning days and early release time throughout the school year, which allow time for staff collaboration within and across schools.
- Dedicated time has been provided for collaboration to ensure alignment of curriculum, instructional practices, and expectations.
- Teachers can propose self-directed learning activities as part of their professional learning time.
- The district supports teachers in pursuing professional learning outside of the district, such as training in Restorative Practices, Verbalizing and Visualizing, and Orton-Gillingham.
- School adjustment counselors across the district meet monthly to collaborate on services for students and to develop monthly themes, such as anti-bullying month in October.
- Nurses meet monthly to collaborate on projects such as creating a resource manual, standardizing communication, and creating a slideshow for teachers who have students with diabetes.
- The district provides an annual budget of approximately $80,000 for professional development and to fund summer curriculum writing.

Principle 5.3 - The community and the district's governing body

provide adequate and dependable financial resources to fully implement the curriculum, including co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities and employ a review process of its financial practices.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- The community and the district's governing body provide adequate and dependable funding for the school, which includes a wide range of programs, services, and co-curricular activities and prioritize student needs.
- School administrators can make requests through the annual budget development process.
- The schools have a wide range of well-developed, specialized programs to meet the specific individual needs of students, including those with dyslexia, social and emotional challenges, and multiple disabilities, including the ACE, RISE, IRWL, and SAIL programs.
- The schools have sufficient professional and support staff to ensure appropriate class sizes and teacher load, averaging 15-24 students in a class.
- There is sufficient funding for in-district and out-of-district professional development.
- Library information services provide a range of materials and technologies that mostly support the curriculum.
- Abundant technology resources include Chromebooks, iPads, Promethean Boards, reliable Wi-Fi, and updated network resources and support.
- The schools have sufficient instructional materials and supplies.
- Furniture, technology, and equipment are maintained and replaced as necessary.

Principle 5.4 - The community and the district's governing body has short-term and longterm plans to address the capital and maintenance needs of the school building, facilities, and technology.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- School administrators across the district coordinate with the director of facilities to develop comprehensive long- and short-term capital improvement plans.
- The district tracks enrollment trends and regularly reports changes to the school committee and the community to address any needs.
- The district monitors census data, which is analyzed annually to predict increases or decreases in student enrollment.
- Technology needs are collaboratively identified with input from the curriculum director and building administrators.
- The district has a plan for network upgrades and technology purchases, including the replacement of outdated devices.

Principle 5.5 - The school has infrastructure and protocols to provide a physically safe environment for students and adults.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- The schools have infrastructure and protocols to provide a physically safe environment for students and adults.
- This fall, Raptor Technologies Visitor Management software was piloted and now has been purchased for all district schools.
- The district created and routinely updates a comprehensive school safety procedures handbook for administrators, faculty, staff, and students, reflecting current expectations and protocols for various emergencies, including weather, major medical, lockdowns, and shelter-in-place.
- All school community members, including students, are aware of the safety protocols in place to support a safe environment for all.
- The school district practices responding to building intruders using the alert, lockdown, inform, counter, and evacuate (ALICE) protocol.
- The schools have emergency panic buttons and a protocol for their use, which sends an alert to police, fire, and emergency medical services.
- The schools complete regular fire and lockdown drills with the cooperation of local police and fire personnel.
- The schools have a positive working relationship with emergency services personnel.
- School-based crisis teams meet regularly.
- The district safety team meets regularly.

Future Areas of Growth In this Standard include:

- Ensure all elementary buildings and facilities fully support the delivery of high-quality curriculum, programs, and services to all students
- Develop a comprehensive technology plan that includes replacement cycles for devices and upgrades as needed to network infrastructure

Sources of Evidence

- central office personnel
- classroom observations
- facility tour
- school leadership
- self-reflection
- teachers

CTE Overall Program Feedback

Overall Summary of CTE Programs in the School

N/A

Priority Areas

Priority Area

The Collaborative Conference visiting team concurs with the Priority Area identified by the school.

Priority Area #1 Goal Statement: The schools will collectively articulate a written curriculum in a consistent format, including units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content and skills, instructional strategies, and assessment practices for all grades and all subject areas across the two schools (2.2a, 2.2).

School Response

Historically, there has been a discrepancy between the taught curriculum at each elementary school. This stems from our district's "newness." We have been working collaboratively to memorialize the taught curriculum so that it is consistent and written. We are also working to align instructional practices and curricular expectations across the two schools. However, this is a work in progress, and more work is needed.

Visiting Team Response

The schools have been documenting the current curriculum through the work of collaborative teams representing teachers from both schools. The schools created guides for each grade level that document many curriculum elements in a family-friendly format, with detailed information about the content and expectations for each subject area and grade level K-5. The schools have yet to explicitly create curriculum documents for teachers that describe instructional strategies, materials, and resources. When the elementary curriculum is articulated in written documents, and when teachers consistently follow the curriculum, the schools will benefit from a higher level of consistency across classes at a grade level across the two sites, and learners will be assured the opportunity to participate in guaranteed learning experiences.

Action Steps

- Create a template for curriculum writing that includes a scope and sequence or curriculum map with units of study that contain guiding/essential questions, concepts, content and skills, instructional strategies, and assessment practices, including summative assessments
- Use identified beliefs about learning to enhance the curriculum with instructional practices that represent best practices in the content area and are aligned with the school and district beliefs
- Identify opportunities within the curriculum at each grade level where students will have the opportunity to develop, practice, and get feedback on their acquisition of the skills identified in the vision of the graduate

Priority Area

The Collaborative Conference visiting team concurs with the Priority Area identified by the schools.

Priority Area #2 Goal Statement: The schools will use a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research to develop their shared core values and beliefs about learning in alignment with the district vision of the graduate (1.2a, 1.2).

School Response

Beliefs About Learning: While each school has its core values, a written document must be crafted to capture the elementary staff's collective beliefs about learning.

Visiting Team Response

The schools have yet to articulate beliefs about learning to align with the district's vision of the graduate.

Action Steps

- Develop a team of stakeholders to examine current research on learning
- Identify key documents/resources to be shared with the faculty for review and discussion
- Draft a set of beliefs about learning
- Consider ways current instructional practices align or do not align with the draft beliefs about learning, and identify strategies to improve alignment
- Refine and publish beliefs about learning

Priority Area

The Collaborative Conference visiting team modified the Priority Area identified by the school.

Priority Area #3 Goal Statement: The schools will ensure that the vision of a graduate is actively reflected in the school culture and is known and understood by all stakeholders (1.2, 2.1).

School Response

Vision of a Graduate: Our district has a recorded vision of a K-12 graduate, but we do not have an official vision of a K-5 graduate.

Visiting Team Response

The district has a written vision of the graduate. The document was created primarily with input from stakeholders at the high school. The document has been shared with elementary faculty, primarily through district emails, and there has been little time to review or discuss the document and the implications of its implementation across K-12. Implementation across K-12 will help the district ensure that all students develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to succeed after high school. Further, implementation will support the development of consistent opportunities to develop these essential skills.

Action Steps

- Provide structured time for faculty to review the district vision of the graduate
- For each of the six areas of empathetic global citizen, responsible collaborator, critical thinker, effective communicator, personally accountable, and social/emotional awareness, identify the specific ways the skills in that area are currently being developed in the elementary curriculum and learning experiences
- Identify benchmarks or goals at critical grade levels, such as grades 2 and 5 with key expectation criteria
- Identify aspects of the vision of the graduate that may require additional focus or the development of expanded learning opportunities
- Articulate age- and grade-appropriate expectations for elementary students in each area
- Develop strategies for students to get feedback on their development of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions identified in the vision of the graduate
- Integrate the vision of the graduate into the written elementary curriculum documents
- Ensure the core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate are actively reflected in the school culture and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations
- Ensure the core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate include the school's commitments to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging
- Develop and implement a formal process to assess and communicate individual learner progress toward achieving the district's vision of the graduate to learners and their families

- Develop an annual report on whole-school progress toward learners' achievement of the vision of the graduate

Commendations

Commendation

The engagement and collaboration of educators and support staff to create a shared sense of agency and responsibility for student well-being

The allocation of time throughout the academic year for continued professional learning and collaboration as problem-solvers and co-learners

The policies and protocols that define and support respectful treatment of all members of the school communities

Commendation

The multiple ways the school communities build and maintain learning environments that are socially, emotionally, and intellectually safe for students and adults

The multiple ways the school community encourages and supports the schools' core values

The allocation and prioritization of time at the beginning of the year to create school-wide and individual classroom charters that contribute to students feeling safe, respected, and valued in school

Commendation

The widespread use of differentiated instructional practices designed to meet the needs of each student

The many opportunities students have to be active learners who lead their own learning

The use of technology across all curricular areas to support teaching and to allow students to demonstrate their learning

Commendation

The opportunities provided to students to use feedback in meaningful ways to support their learning

The use of a wide range of assessment practices to support and improve learning

The engagement and collaboration of school leaders to actively develop and create school improvement goals to align with district strategic goals

Commendation

The allocation of learning supports and the multi-tiered approach to learning that supports the growth of all students

The multiple ways the school community has developed strong partnerships with local community resources to enhance student learning opportunities

The strong relationships built with families promoting a partnership with the schools to ensure student learning

Commendation

The allocation of time for educators to participate in professional learning through book clubs

The use of the transparent classroom model to encourage peer observations

The process of identifying and referring students who need additional assistance

Commendation

The range of timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students that support each student's success and well-being

The regular meetings with students to provide personal, social, emotional, and academic counseling by the adjustment counselors

The consistent preventative health services and direct intervention services by the nurses

Commendation

The collaboration with staff to ensure active engagement in the implementation of the school's curriculum and to support teachers in enhancing student learning through the library media specialist and technology integration teacher

The strong and consistent collaboration among all educators, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff to meet each student's goals

The district support for professional learning that meets the needs of individual teachers and support district goals and initiatives

Commendation

The allocation of funds to support professional learning and curriculum review, revision, and development

The technology resources that support teaching and student learning at every grade level

The financial resources provided by the district and community to ensure that teachers have the needed materials for curriculum implementation

Commendation

The proactive, collaborative planning related to capital improvements, including technology

The focus on providing the necessary infrastructure and protocols to create a physically safe environment for students and adults

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

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

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

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

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES
Commission on Public Schools

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

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

Roster of Team Members

Chair(s)

Chair: Dr. Erin McGurk - New England Association of Schools & Colleges

Team Members

Kristin Beaudet - New London Public Schools

Kristen Camara - North Elementary School

Jeniffer Palladino - Plymouth Public Schools

Jennifer Renkiewicz - Odyssey Community School