

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

Commission on Public Schools



Commission on Public Schools

**Report of the Visiting Team for
Nathan Hale-Ray High School**

Moodus, CT

04-27-2026 - 04-28-2026

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School and Community Summary

School and Community Summary

Nathan Hale-Ray High School is located in East Haddam, a rural community situated in Middlesex County, Connecticut. Nestled in the village of Moodus, the town borders the Connecticut River and possesses a strong sense of history and small-town character, named for the famed patriot Nathan Hale and the notable local businessman Frederick L. Ray. Today, many residents commute to jobs in surrounding towns or operate local businesses, contributing to a median household income that remains above the state average. The East Haddam Public School District serves approximately 1,000 students across three schools (PK–12). The district's economic profile reflects both affluence and need, with 27.3 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals, and 14.4 percent receiving special education services. The student population at Nathan Hale-Ray High School reflects the district's most recent demographics: 88.4 percent white, 6.7 percent Hispanic/Latino, 1.2 percent Asian, and 2.9 percent identifying as two or more races. On average, the high school enrolls approximately 250 students in grades 9–12.

Educational Outcomes and Commitment to Excellence

Despite being a small, rural school, Nathan Hale-Ray High School maintains educational outcomes that significantly surpass state averages, reflecting a deep commitment to student success. The 2025 cohort achieved a four-year graduation rate of 94.0 percent, which substantially exceeds the state average of 88.9 percent. While chronic absenteeism remains a national and statewide challenge, the district reports a lower rate of 10.4 percent for the 2024-2025 school year, compared to the state average of 24.8 percent. Postsecondary and career success remains a sharp focus. Outcomes for the Class of 2025 show that 84 percent of graduates pursued higher education (63 percent enrolled in a four-year college and 21 percent in a two-year college program). The remaining graduates pursued immediate career paths, with 9 percent entering trade and vocational fields, 6 percent going directly into employment and 1 percent into the military. The district supports this high level of achievement with an expenditure of \$24,290 per pupil, which is higher than the state average of \$21,143. The budget is predominantly supported by local revenues, which fund 78.0 percent of the total. This funding supports rigorous learning opportunities, with 97.9 percent of 11th and 12th graders enrolled in at least one college and career readiness course during their high school career, including advanced placement (AP), career and technical education (CTE), and workplace experiences.

A Unique Resource: The Ray Board

A distinctive and crucial asset for Nathan Hale-Ray High School is its long-standing partnership with the Ray School Corporation, commonly known as the Ray Board. Dating back to 1941, this entity provides substantial financial support that greatly enhances the school's educational offerings. With current annual funding of approximately \$350,000, the Ray Board finances key resources, including the career and technical education departments (agriculture, business, consumer science, and technology education), an 18-passenger school bus for transportation, technology teacher grants, and various student cash awards and scholarships. This unique and generous support enables the school to provide specialized vocational and technological opportunities that would be unattainable through standard operating budgets.

Culture and Institutional Improvement

The school culture at Nathan Hale-Ray is defined by a strong emphasis on personalized learning and community involvement. Co-curricular opportunities foster an inclusive environment through programs such as Unified Sports and Best Buddies, along with a broad range of arts and athletics programs. The district has recently prioritized significant institutional improvements in special education, truancy reduction, and family engagement. Efforts to support student attendance include an established attendance appeals process and ongoing collaboration with East Haddam Youth and Family Services to address the root causes of chronic absenteeism. The school consistently celebrates student accomplishments through avenues such as the milestone

celebrations, National Honor Society, Tri-M Honor Societies, student of the month program, and Bs or better celebrations, Feature Fridays, athlete of the week, and many more, ensuring that both academic success and positive citizenship are highlighted across the school community.

Core Values, Beliefs, and Vision of the Graduate

EAST HADDAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the East Haddam School District is to develop a community of lifelong learners who are prepared to become independent, creative, and productive citizens for our diverse and ever-changing global society.

Core Values and Beliefs

Nathan Hale-Ray High School prepares all students to meet 21st Century Expectations as self-motivated, lifelong learners in a positive environment. The school collaborates with the community to promote the development of college and career-ready citizens in a diverse global society.

Transferable Skills

- 1) An East Haddam graduate is an **effective communicator** who exchanges thoughts and ideas in a variety of formats and settings.
- 2) An East Haddam Public Schools graduate is an **informed thinker** who uses critical thinking skills to draw conclusions and reach justifiable decisions.
- 3) An East Haddam Public Schools graduate is a **problem solver** who strategizes and innovates to develop solutions.
- 4) An East Haddam Public Schools graduate is a **self-directed learner** who engages in inquiries across multiple disciplines and contexts.
- 5) An East Haddam Public Schools graduate is a **responsible citizen** who contributes to the school and larger communities.

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 demonstrates a commitment to all students feeling that they belong and are valued and accepted.
 - 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), which is composed of the Committee on Public Elementary, Middle, and High Schools (CPEMHS), and the Committee on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI); and the Commission on International Education (CIE).

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

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

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Reflection

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

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

In addition, the professional staff was required to read and vote on Part 2 of the self-reflection to ensure that all voices were heard related to the alignment of the school to the Standards for Accreditation. All professional staff members were expected to participate in the self-reflection process either by participating on a committee or by participating in discussions and evidence gathering to support the school's 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 Nathan Hale-Ray High School in East Haddam, Connecticut. The visiting team members spent two days conducting a visit; reviewed the self-reflection documents, which had been prepared for their examination; met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students, and parents; and

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

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

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

Foundational Element Ratings

Foundational Element Ratings

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

Foundational Element 1.1a - Learning Culture

Narrative

The school community provides a socially and emotionally safe environment for students and adults. This is demonstrated through strong, trusting relationships between students and staff, and a culture in which individuals feel respected and valued. Clear expectations for behavior, consistent supports, and proactive approaches to student well-being contribute to a positive school climate. In addition, staff are responsive to student needs and work collaboratively to address concerns and promote a sense of belonging for all members of the school community.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 1.2a - Learning Culture

Narrative

The school does not yet have a written document describing its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate that includes the attainment of transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for future success. While the school is currently developing its vision of a learner, the previously identified transferable skills continue to be integrated across courses throughout the year.

Rating

Does Not Meet the Standard

Foundational Element 2.2a - Student Learning

Narrative

The school does not yet have written curriculum documents for all courses that include a scope and sequence or curriculum map with units of study that contain expected course outcomes for each student, guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, and assessments aligned with expected course outcomes. The school utilizes an online platform to house its written curriculum, and while a formal curriculum development process is underway with established curriculum in place for some courses, a consistent, fully written curriculum in a standardized format has not yet been completed across all courses in all departments.

Rating

Does Not Meet the Standard

Foundational Element 3.1a - Professional Practices

Narrative

The school has a current school improvement/ growth plan. The plan reflects its core beliefs about teaching and learning while aligning with the district's K–12 transferable skills and performance indicators, including effective communication, informed thinking, problem-solving, self-directed learning, and responsible citizenship. The current plan includes two theories of action with targeted goals, strategies, and measurable outcomes. The first theory of action focuses on data-driven instruction in grades 9–12, where educators use professional learning communities to analyze student data, implement interventions, and reflect on instructional practices to improve achievement. Key strategies include expanding data analysis across grade levels, utilizing collaborative planning time, and monitoring progress through interim assessment blocks, classroom assessments, and progress reports. The second theory of action based goal is focused on improving school culture and student leadership using the *Leader in Me* framework, advisory lessons, and student leadership activities. The school improvement plan is not currently aligned with a broader district-wide growth or improvement plan.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 3.6a - Professional Practices

Narrative

N/A

Foundational Element 4.1a - Learning Support

Narrative

The school has intervention strategies designed to support learners. The school demonstrates a developing, multi-layered system of academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports that uses ongoing data review and staff collaboration to provide targeted interventions. Grade-level teams regularly analyze academic, attendance, and behavior data to identify student needs and guide supports such as the relationships, intervention, support, enrichment, and success (RISES) interventions, student support team (SST) meetings, "on track" conferences, counseling services, and discussion using KidStat, a student-centered data review protocol used by educators to track student progress, spot early warning signs, and coordinate support for at-risk students. While these structures promote early identification and shared problem-solving, the tiered intervention system is not yet fully formalized or consistently implemented across the school. Student referral processes are in place but vary by grade level, and continued work is needed to standardize practices. Families are kept informed through multiple communication channels, including ParentSquare and SST outreach, which also connects them to community resources.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 5.1a - Learning Resources

Narrative

The community and district provide Nathan Hale-Ray High School with a well-maintained building and facilities that effectively support the delivery of curriculum, diverse programming, and student services. The school is home to numerous CTE and agricultural programs, housed in spaces uniquely designed to meet their specific needs, while technology resources, including 1:1 student devices and multimedia-equipped classrooms, ensure adequate support for all programming. Throughout the building, student work and information are prominently displayed in clean, welcoming spaces. The school also maintains full compliance with applicable federal and state laws, as well as local fire, health, and safety regulations, and maintains comprehensive safety and security measures that include dedicated staffing and a visitor management protocol.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 5.5a - Learning Resources

Narrative

The school provides a physically safe environment for students and adults. The school maintains a safe and secure learning environment through clearly defined and regularly reviewed crisis management protocols. Staff and students are trained through routine drills and procedures, ensuring readiness for a range of emergency situations. A collaborative safety structure, including school and district leadership, works with local emergency responders to assess risks and refine response plans. Classrooms are equipped with accessible emergency materials to support timely and effective action. In addition to physical safety measures, the school promotes social-emotional well-being through counseling supports, prevention programs, and threat assessment practices. These efforts contribute to a positive school climate where students feel safe, supported, and prepared.

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 all students feeling that they belong and are valued and accepted.

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- Faculty members are highly regarded, helpful, and provide extra help, paraprofessional support, and guidance.
- Students appreciate the faculty and have a high level of enjoyment in learning at the school.
- There is a strong sense of rapport between teachers and students.
- The NHRHS advisory program focuses on social and emotional learning (SEL).
- The school offers courses in world languages, Black and Latino Studies, and Women's Studies to provide a broader and deeper understanding of multiple perspectives.
- The school library, field trips, summer reading, and student-led organizations provide multiple avenues for learning about various cultures.

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:

- The school has identified transferable skills as part of the ongoing process of developing its vision of a learner.
- The school incorporates the *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* framework into its advisory curriculum to support transferable skills.
- The school's core values are structured around graduation competencies and grade-level performance indicators.

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:

- Advisory is held every Friday, providing students an opportunity to connect with a different faculty member for support and guidance.
- Formal on-track conferences are conducted with students to check in on their academic progress.
- Students are encouraged to use Naviance to explore potential career paths and align them with their academic choices.

- Staff are widely available for individual conferences with students during the advisory period.

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 demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement through collaborative learning, innovation, and reflective practice.
- A shared growth mindset is evident, with educators using innovative approaches to achieve common instructional goals.
- Students and parents strongly support the high school faculty.
- Students can identify numerous trusted adults within the building.
- Instructional leaders meet weekly in team meetings to collaborate and coordinate academic policies within their departments.
- Faculty collaborate as problem-solvers and co-learners, engaging in meaningful professional dialogue.

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:

- School-wide initiatives, such as the "Bs-or-Better Pledge" and the senior capstone, require students to set goals, manage responsibilities, and actively use support systems.
- Academic pathways, including advanced placement coursework and experiential learning opportunities, encourage students to engage in rigorous dialogue, test ideas, and learn from both success and failure within a respectful environment.

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 principal, in collaboration with the assistant administrator and instructional leaders, provides instructional leadership through a comprehensive teacher evaluation and professional growth system aligned with Connecticut guidelines.
- Teachers engage in a structured annual cycle that includes goal setting, frequent observations, formative feedback, and mid-year and end-of-year conferences focused on instructional practice and student outcomes.
- The school climate committee, which includes students, educators, and administrators, uses school climate data (such as the *Leader in Me* measurable results assessment survey) to identify focus areas and inform goal setting.
- Students have access to a broad range of leadership opportunities through clubs, activities, advisory-based initiatives, and career-focused experiences.
- A school improvement plan was collaboratively developed by school leaders.

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

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- Students are offered multiple opportunities to engage with the community and promote service learning.
Examples include:
 - the creation and implementation of a disc golf course in the center of town that provides a free recreational space for the community,
 - agricultural courses that engage students in hands-on learning experiences at local orchards, including pruning and maintenance activities,
 - service learning that is actively promoted and formally recognized at graduation, highlighting student civic engagement, and
 - Unified Sports and Best Buddies programs that provide co-curricular opportunities fostering inclusion and peer connection across diverse learners.

Future Areas of Growth In this Standard include:

Develop and implement a plan to:

- complete the development and implementation of the written document describing the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate that includes the attainment of transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for future success
- ensure the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate are known and understood by all stakeholders
- 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

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- department leaders
- facility tour
- parents
- school leadership
- self-reflection
- student work
- 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 school has defined a set of transferable skills and uses school-wide rubrics to assess, monitor, and communicate students' classroom progress, as well as to evaluate the senior capstone project.
- The district is in the process of revising and strengthening a formal system to assess and communicate each learner's progress toward the evolving vision of the graduate to students and families.

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 school utilizes an online platform to house its written curriculum.
- The curriculum development process is ongoing, with a formal written curriculum in place for some courses.

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:

- Some written curriculum documents emphasize deep understanding and include interdisciplinary learning, project-based learning, and authentic learning experiences.
- Some written curricula include discipline-specific, higher order thinking and transferable skills and dispositions.
- Some written curricula emphasize learner application of knowledge and skills.

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:

- The school uses varied instructional practices that include differentiation, individualization, and

- personalization in leveled classes for all learners.
- Routine and formal formative assessments are used inconsistently to adjust instruction.
- The school's instructional practices consistently include organizational grouping and intervention strategies that meet the needs of each learner, including leveled classes, a school-wide synchronous study hall to address student needs, the "sixth class," where students who are falling behind or need extra support are assigned to a specific support educator, and an integrated Algebra class.
- The school's instructional practices include structures and supports to provide all learners with access to rigorous learning opportunities, such as intentionally scaffolded instructional materials (including readings and learning tasks), addressing a range of learning styles, and open enrollment policies for advanced placement (AP) and early college experience (ECE) courses.

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

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- Students are given multiple opportunities to engage in active learning through meaningful, relevant, and self-initiated learning experiences, such as independent studies in sign language; exit interviews with seniors that ask, "How much do you feel that your voice mattered in your education?"; and AP Art portfolios where students create their own essential questions to explore through their work.
- Learning opportunities include setting goals and reflecting upon results to guide further learning, notably through capstone projects, AP Art portfolios, and the ability to choose courses freely without rigid prerequisites.
- Active learning also encompasses the pursuit of personal interests and opportunities for creative expression, evidenced by AP Art classes, independent studies, and capstone projects that allow students to drive their own learning.

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:

- Learners are given multiple opportunities to engage in assessment experiences that are cognitively challenging and require them to develop and exercise a full range of thinking skills and learning dispositions, such as the kite project, water project, and golf project.
- Learners are provided with numerous opportunities to engage in analysis, synthesis, creativity, and the understanding of relationships through cross-curricular collaborations.
 - The mathematics department's water project asks students to incorporate concepts from social studies alongside geometry and algebra skills to create presentations that help their peers understand real-world issues.
 - The Model UN unit is a collaborative effort utilizing both English and social studies skills.
- Learners are given multiple opportunities to engage in investigation and examination.
 - Robotic technology students investigate how to design a more efficient Vex robot and test it against their classmates' designs.
- Learners are provided with several opportunities to engage in critical and creative thinking.
 - The mathematics department's midpoint investigation asks students to use critical and imaginative thinking to determine the midpoint between two points within a real-world context, as seen in the guitar design workshop.

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 effective assessment practices, including formative and summative assessments, to gather information about student progress, including pre/post assessments and performance-based tasks.
- Students are made aware of performance expectations and understand how they will be assessed prior to assessment.
- The school consistently uses effective assessment practices, including regular and consistent checks for understanding in ways that engage every learner's thinking, including self-assessment.
 - For example, students in all music ensembles participate in a structured group presentation where they evaluate their learning process, articulating evidence of their growth as independent musicians, effective collaborators, and developing artists.
- The school often uses assessment practices that include presentations of learning such as chorus concerts, Model UN mock assembly, and capstone presentations to authentic audiences, including students, families, community members, and professionals.

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:

- Curriculum documents include multiple and varied opportunities for students to receive and respond to feedback in order to improve learning, including the use of transferable skills competencies and the Integrated Algebra course's "data that matters" project.
- The school provides learners with consistent, systematic, specific, and timely corrective feedback through department-level grading and reporting practices, along with transferable skills competencies rubrics.
- The school provides learners with opportunities to revise and improve their work through highly varied department-level grading and reporting practices.

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:

- Learners consistently use technology in informed, effective, and ethical ways to access, support, document, and supplement their learning.
- Students are provided with a Chromebook to access the Google environment as their primary learning management tool.
- Learners consistently use technology to research, create, and problem-solve, such as the CO2 cars in CTE classes, the podcast media room, and the music theory video games.
- Learners engage with Google Classroom as their learning management platform as well as a collaborative tool.

- Learners consistently use technology to share work with an audience beyond the school community, as evidenced by the district's YouTube page with student podcasts and morning news episodes.

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 the graduate with specific and measurable criteria for success
- integrate opportunities for students to practice the skills within the vision of the graduate and receive feedback on their progress throughout the curriculum
- embed the vision of the graduate into curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices

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

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

Develop and implement a plan to complete written curriculum documents for all courses in the program of studies, ensuring that each set of curriculum documents includes:

- a scope and sequence or curriculum map that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, skills, and assessments aligned with expected course outcomes
- instructional strategies, materials, and resources
- formative and interim assessments
- opportunities for all students to see themselves represented within the curriculum
- connections to the school's vision of the graduate

Develop and implement a published curriculum review and revision cycle

Ensure that the written curriculum

- makes connections to prior knowledge across disciplines
- places emphasis on learner application of knowledge and skills
- includes discipline-specific, higher order thinking and transferable skills and dispositions
- embeds skills and competencies necessary to attain the school's vision of the graduate

Increase opportunities for all students, across all course levels, including non-AP and non-honors classes, to engage in rigorous, higher-order thinking that challenges and extends their learning

Expand access to rigorous coursework, such as AP courses, by, for example, reducing alternating year offerings to ensure students can consistently engage in intellectual risk-taking

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- facility tour
- self-reflection
- student work
- students
- 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 creates yearly school improvement plans that reflect core beliefs about teaching and learning while aligning with the district's K–12 transferable skills and performance indicators.
- The district established five key transferable skills that shape its vision for student success: effective communication, informed thinking, problem solving, self-directed learning, and responsible citizenship.
- The current school improvement plan has two theories of action that outline targeted goals, strategies, and measurable results.
 - The first centers on data-driven instruction in grades 9–12. Through intentional collaboration in professional learning communities (PLCs), educators review student data, apply focused interventions, and reflect on instructional practices to strengthen achievement.
 - The second is focused on strengthening school culture and developing student leadership through the integration of the *Leader in Me* framework based on Stephen Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.
- Primary strategies include extending data analysis practices across all grade-level teams, using shared planning time for collaborative work, and tracking progress with interim assessment blocks (IABs), classroom-based assessments, and progress reports.

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:

- Educators participate in reflection, collaboration, and professional learning, as evidenced by their regular weekly and monthly PLC meetings.
- Grading and reporting practices are inconsistent across the school, but consistent practices are applied within some departments.
- Structured opportunities for collaboration are built into the school schedule for grade-level teams.
- Monthly PLC planning times provide space for teachers to exchange instructional ideas, review student work, and consider ways to improve their practice.
- Common planning time is sometimes available for some departments.
- Professional learning is supported through a mix of formal and informal experiences that promote ongoing growth, including faculty meetings, department meetings, and professional development sessions outlined in the 2025–2026 Hale-Ray meeting schedule, along with specific requests.
- The district's teacher evaluation system, *Seek, Discover, Confirm, and Share* (SDCS), reinforces reflective practice and continuous professional development, as described in the East Haddam Public Schools Teacher Evaluation Program update.

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 use a variety of evidence sources, including student work, both independently and collaboratively, to guide instructional choices and shape program improvements.
- Teachers analyze assessment data and classroom performance to refine existing courses and design new offerings that better address student needs, as seen in the science curriculum redesign, where prior assessment results and student outcomes informed updates to course sequences and instructional methods.
- Faculty regularly review data from multiple formative and summative measures, including shared course and grade-level assessments.
- Weekly meetings within departments and grade-level teams provide time to examine student progress and identify trends in achievement and behavior.
- Grade-level and content-area teams have ongoing discussions about individual students who may require additional support.
- The use of D/F lists highlights how performance data is tracked and used to inform decisions about school-wide interventions.
- Educators rely on data to assess and strengthen school programs and services, including those related to health, counseling, library access, and student support structures.
- Tools such as KidStat documentation and student academic support (SAS) blocks allow staff to monitor progress and coordinate assistance for students facing academic or social challenges.
- Teachers implement individual plans with fidelity, including accommodations for students with 504 plans and individualized education programs (IEPs), including extended time, graphic organizers, and co-taught classroom settings that offer enhanced instructional support.

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

Areas in which the school aligns with this principle include:

- There are ongoing efforts within departments to refine local curriculum documents.
 - Some departments, such as science, are actively engaged in curriculum review and redesign, serving as early examples of this work.
- District-level curriculum committees have recently met to develop a curriculum plan.
- The school uses the Rubicon Atlas curriculum mapping platform to house curriculum documents.
- Some departments have informal processes for vertical alignment within the school and with feeder schools.

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 school ensures all students have access to challenging academic opportunities through a variety of

structured pathways.

- The program of studies and course selection process clearly outlines options such as honors, AP, and CTE courses, making rigorous learning accessible to all students.
- Intentional course planning encourages broad participation in advanced coursework rather than limiting it to a small group.
- Academic support systems, including the National Honor Society tutoring program and the relationships, intervention, support, enrichment, and success (RISE) and specialized academic support (SAS) blocks, help students succeed in demanding classes.
- Enrollment data shows strong participation in advanced courses, including AP and CTE pathways, reflecting inclusive access to rigorous learning.
- Partnerships and frameworks, such as the Connecticut RISE Network and *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, support student success through data use and skill development.
- Instructional practices promote inclusive learning environments where students of diverse abilities learn together in heterogeneous groupings.
- Differentiated instruction and collaboration with special education staff ensure equitable access to the curriculum for students with varied learning needs.
- A wide range of clubs and activities fosters inclusion and supports students from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds.
- Clear policies, including admissions, placement, and Title IX guidelines, ensure fair, transparent, and equitable access to all courses, programs, and opportunities.

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 build and maintain partnerships with community organizations, businesses, and colleges to create meaningful, real-world (authentic) learning experiences.
- Partnerships are integrated into academic, co-curricular, and experiential learning opportunities to increase student engagement and relevance.
- Students participate in internships and job shadowing through the senior capstone program, applying classroom knowledge in real-world settings with mentor support.
- Service-learning projects and community involvement, such as the partnership with the Moodus Senior Center and a local orchard, are embedded across courses and activities, promoting leadership and civic responsibility.
- Additional experiences such as guest speakers, field trips, and leadership opportunities further connect learning to real-life applications.
- Students document and are recognized for extensive community service through logs, presentations, and distinctions such as the National Honor Society and service awards.
- Dual enrollment and college partnerships allow students to earn college credit and better understand postsecondary expectations.
- CTE partnerships provide work-based learning, industry certifications, and career readiness experiences aligned with workforce and higher education expectations.
- Educators engage families through consistent communication, such as the annual "welcome back" phone call, school events, and outreach efforts, ensuring families have opportunities to be involved in the school community.

Future Areas of Growth In this Standard include:

Once the district strategic plan is developed, ensure alignment between the district strategic plan and the school improvement plan

Develop and implement a continuous improvement plan that represents school-wide goals and alignment, with measurable outcomes

Develop and implement a curriculum revision cycle that aligns with district goals as well as state and national standards

Develop and implement a consistent PLC model that aligns curriculum, instructional practices, and equitable learning opportunities

Develop and implement school-wide rubrics with consistent language that directly represent the district's transferable skill competencies

Strengthen professional development and the consistent use of student data to inform instruction and improve learning outcomes

Establish a systematic process for selecting professional development priorities through the PEDEC committee to ensure alignment with school goals

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- department leaders
- facility tour
- school leadership
- school support staff
- self-reflection
- students
- teacher interview
- 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 school demonstrates a multi-layered system of academic, behavioral, and social-emotional support that uses ongoing data review, collaboration among staff, and targeted interventions to respond proactively to student needs.
- A range of structured support, including RISES interventions, SST meetings, "on track" conferences, counseling services, and specialized programs, reflects a coordinated effort to promote student success and well-being.
- Grade-level teams regularly analyze academic, attendance, and behavior data to identify students needing additional support and to guide timely interventions.
- Tiered intervention practices are emerging, with programs such as math diagnostics, RISES supports, and KidStat discussions providing early foundations for a more formalized system.
- The school has established collaborative processes, such as KidStat, to document concerns and facilitate shared problem-solving among educators and support staff.
- While intervention systems are active, the school recognizes the need to more clearly define and consistently implement a school-wide multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework.
- Student identification and referral processes are in place but are not yet fully standardized, with grade-level teams currently serving as the primary mechanism for referrals.
- Families are informed about available student support services through multiple communication channels, including ParentSquare and coordinated outreach from the student support team.
- Outreach efforts connect families to both school-based and community resources, including counseling, health services, and developmental supports.

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:

- The school provides counseling services that support students' academic, personal, social, emotional, career, and college planning needs.
- Counseling services are delivered by a qualified team that includes a school psychologist, school counselors, a school social worker, and a school-based mental health therapist.
- Students receive regular support through individual counseling, group sessions, classroom lessons, and ongoing check-ins.
- Developmentally appropriate counseling programs guide students through each grade level, including freshman transition lessons, junior planning activities, and senior postsecondary preparation.
- A sophomore career fair and related activities expose students to a variety of career pathways and future opportunities.
- Counselors meet regularly with students to review academic progress, graduation requirements, and postsecondary goals.

- The counseling department collaborates with external agencies, including community mental health and social service organizations, to expand student support options.
- Programs are informed by feedback mechanisms such as alumni panels, senior surveys, and communication with postsecondary institutions.
- Students are provided with multiple tools and resources to explore career interests, including assessments and online platforms like Naviance and O*NET.
- The school maintains a structured and data-informed counseling program that supports ongoing improvement and helps students prepare for life beyond high 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:

- The high school is staffed by one licensed practical nurse, supported by four district registered nurses who manage routine care, emergencies, and chronic health conditions.
- All nursing staff maintain active licensure, complete required training, and engage in ongoing professional development to meet state and public health standards.
- Due to the district's size, nurses provide individualized care and maintain strong knowledge of students' medical histories and family contexts.
- School nurses collaborate closely with administrators, counselors, special education staff, and paraprofessionals to ensure coordinated health and safety support.
- Preventive and direct health services are fully integrated, including screenings, immunization checks, and early identification of health concerns.
- The nursing team maintains consistent communication with families and school staff, using structured documentation systems to support timely monitoring and response.
- Established referral processes connect students to medical, mental health, and community resources while ensuring coordinated follow-up and comprehensive support.

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 library is staffed by a highly qualified certified library media specialist with advanced degrees, extensive experience, and ongoing professional learning in education and library science.
- The library media specialist actively participates in curriculum implementation and collaborates across PLCs and departments to support instructional goals.
- The library media specialist provides direct classroom support across multiple subject areas through co-teaching, push-in instruction, and curriculum collaboration.
- Instructional support focuses on information literacy, research skills, citation practices, and inquiry-based learning across grade levels and disciplines.
- All 9th-grade students receive formal instruction in research and citation skills, with continued support through projects like capstone, Model UN, and interdisciplinary units.
- The library media specialist supports student-centered learning by fostering independent inquiry, leadership opportunities, and student-run activities such as book clubs and resource selection.

- Collection development is guided by student input and interest, with diverse genres and formats, including print and digital resources that promote independent reading.
- The library media center maintains a modern, technology-rich environment with tools such as 3D printers, a TV studio, 1:1 devices, and flexible, collaborative furniture.
- The collection is continuously updated to align with curriculum needs and better reflect diverse cultures, perspectives, and student demographics.
- The library media center is open before, during, and after school, providing accessible space and resources for research, collaboration, and academic support.

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:

- The school employs a sufficient number of certified and appropriately trained staff, including special education teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors, and related service providers, to meet diverse student needs.
- Special education staff develop and implement individualized IEPs and participate in ongoing professional development, including training in behavior management and de-escalation strategies.
- Grade-level teams, student support staff, and special education personnel collaborate regularly through weekly meetings to monitor student progress and coordinate supports.
- Related services such as speech therapy, occupational and physical therapy, board-certified behavior analyst (BCBA) support, vision services, and transition programming are provided according to student IEPs and 504 plans.
- Counseling and support staff, including psychologists, social workers, and school counselors, are available to assist students in crisis and provide ongoing emotional and behavioral support.
- A co-teaching model in core classes promotes shared responsibility between general and special educators, ensuring alignment of instruction and support.
- Students receive appropriately challenging learning experiences through modified instruction, flexible scheduling, and individualized academic pathways.
- The school provides structured transition programming, learning center support, and life skills instruction tailored to student needs and postsecondary goals.
- Inclusive practices ensure students are educated in the least restrictive environment whenever possible, with accommodations and modifications provided in general education settings.
- Collaboration among educators, related service providers, and support staff ensures coordinated planning and instructional strategies that promote access and participation for all learners.

Future Areas of Growth In this Standard include:

Develop and implement a plan to create a formal tiered system of support for identified and non- identified students

Develop and implement a formal, defined process to identify and refer students who need additional assistance

Ensure that school counselors' duties are prioritized to meet the social, emotional, academic, and post-secondary needs of all students

Decrease student-to-counselor ratios to better support student needs

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- department leaders
- facility tour
- school leadership
- school support staff
- self-reflection
- students
- teacher interview
- 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 school's buildings and facilities support the effective delivery of curriculum, programs, and services.
- The district provides a safe, secure, and well-maintained learning environment.
- Instructional spaces are equipped with modern technology, including Wi-Fi access and digital displays.
- Facilities, including the family consumer science lab, science labs, art and music rooms, library media center, TV/radio studio, maker space labs, indoor and outdoor CTE spaces, Sugar Shack, greenhouse, and school walking trail, support hands-on, interdisciplinary, and experiential learning opportunities.

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 school and district provide sufficient time, structures, and financial resources to support research-based instruction and continuous improvement.
- The district supports professional development and time. The calendar includes both full- and half-day professional development days that emphasize district and school improvement priorities, including Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) integration, Proactive Management Techniques (PMT), Stop the Bleed training, inclusive instructional practices, and mandated trainings.
- Ongoing collaboration is embedded in the school structure through weekly departmental common planning, grade-level team meetings, and faculty meetings.
- Collaborative teams focus on data review, assessment calibration, and instructional improvement.
- Teachers contribute to leadership and decision-making by serving on committees.
- Administrators support staff development through class observations, teacher evaluation, coaching conversations, and professional development.

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 district provides funding for curriculum, co-curricular programs, and student learning opportunities.
- The annual budget process is transparent, data-driven (needs assessment, enrollment projections, program evaluation), and includes district leaders, school administrators, board of education members, and community stakeholders.
- Funding decisions align with district priorities, including 1:1 technology, supporting curriculum updates, and instructional materials.
- There is a focus on ensuring equitable access to high-quality learning experiences for all students.
- Consistent funding supports both academic and co-curricular programs.
- Financial resources also sustain student support services, including school counseling, special education, and social-emotional initiatives.
- The district seeks additional funding from grants, community partnerships, and Ray Board funding.
- Key digital tools supporting teaching and learning include Google Suite for collaboration and content creation, PowerSchool for monitoring academic progress, and SecurlyPass for secure access to online resources.

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:

- The district maintains short- and long-term plans to ensure safe, efficient, and high-quality learning environments that include daily custodial and routine maintenance.
- The district maintains a multi-year capital improvement plan (CIP) that includes HVAC upgrades, roofing projects, paving, flooring replacements, and lighting upgrades.
- The technology department oversees infrastructure and planning, including software licensing, hardware replacement cycles, and network upgrades.

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 school has a comprehensive crisis management and safety planning district safety committee that has developed clear, detailed emergency response protocols, including emergency response plans, step-by-step crisis procedures, and emergency response kits.
- Multiple automated external defibrillators (AEDs) are available around the school campus.
- School crisis team meets regularly to review and update protocols.
- Regular safety drills conducted in accordance with state regulations.
- Special education staff and administrators have received physical/psychological management training (PMT).
- Strong collaboration with local emergency services in addition to a full-time, armed school security officer, school resource officer, and hall monitor for daily supervision, as well as the use of security cameras for real-time monitoring of common areas.

- Safety data sheets are available in science labs and CTE spaces.
- Required written and applied safety testing is conducted in all applicable CTE programs.

Future Areas of Growth In this Standard include:

Prioritize and fund capital improvement projects as outlined in the five-year plan in order to prevent deferred maintenance and the compounding of facility-related issues

Develop plans to expand student spaces, with priority given to the performing arts program, and to increase cafeteria capacity to better accommodate student enrollment and scheduling demands

Strengthen collaboration with community voters and the board of finance to develop a sustainable budget that consistently supports the educational needs of students and families

Sources of Evidence

- central office personnel
- classroom observations
- community members
- department leaders
- facility tour
- parents
- school board
- school leadership

Priority Areas

Priority Area

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

Priority Area #1 Goal Statement: The school will complete the written document describing its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of a learner that includes the attainment of transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for future success, ensure the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of a learner are known and understood by all stakeholders, and are actively reflected in the school culture and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations (1.2a, 1.2).

School Response - Nathan Hale-Ray High School is currently engaged in a dynamic, collaborative process to review and refine its vision of a learner (Foundational Element 1.2a). While the district has established five core transferable skills—effective communication, informed thinking, problem-solving, self-directed learning, and responsible citizenship—the school recognizes the need to formalize this vision to ensure it reflects the specific dispositions necessary for future success.

Once this "refreshed" vision is finalized, the priority will shift toward full systemic integration. This includes the review and potential revision of associated rubrics to ensure they are applied consistently across all disciplines, providing students with a clear, measurable roadmap to attain the skills and knowledge required for postsecondary success.

Visiting Team Response - Nathan Hale-Ray High School demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement through its ongoing, collaborative review and refinement of its vision of a learner (Foundational Element 1.2a). The school has grounded this work in the district's five established transferable skills: effective communication, informed thinking, problem-solving, self-directed learning, and responsible citizenship, and recognizes the importance of formalizing a vision that authentically reflects the specific dispositions necessary for student success beyond high school. As the school works toward finalizing this revised vision, it has identified systemic integration as one of its Priority Areas for Growth, including reviewing and potentially revising associated rubrics to ensure consistent, cross-disciplinary application. This intentional approach reflects the school's dedication to providing all students with a clear and measurable roadmap for acquiring the skills and knowledge needed for postsecondary success.

Suggested Action Steps

- Finalize the vision of a learner in collaboration with all stakeholders
- Create processes and visuals to ensure the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of a learner are known and understood by all stakeholders
- Create processes and procedures to 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
- Review and revise rubrics associated with the transferable skills to ensure consistent, cross-disciplinary application
- Develop a system-wide plan and timeline for integrating the finalized vision of a learner into curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices
- Provide professional development to staff on using the revised rubrics for consistent application and providing corrective feedback
- Create a cross-departmental committee to audit current instructional practices for alignment with the finalized vision of a learner
- Establish a school-wide reporting system to track student demonstration of vision of a learner on key assessments (e.g., performance tasks)

- Publicly celebrate and showcase student work that exemplifies the vision of a learner, engaging the wider community

Priority Area

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

Priority Area #2 Goal Statement: The school will create written curriculum documents for all courses in all departments that include a scope and sequence or curriculum map with units of study that contain expected course outcomes for each student, guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, formative assessments, assessments aligned with expected course outcomes, instructional strategies, and connections to the school's vision of a learner (2.2a, 2.2, 2.3, 3.4).

School Response - In alignment with Standard 2 (Student Learning) and Standard 3 (Professional Practices), we have identified the establishment of a formal, school-wide curriculum cycle as a critical priority. While the district uses the Atlas management system to house curriculum, there is a recognized need for a cohesive plan to systematically update and align all units of study with the evolving learner vision. Priority will be given to documenting formal written curricula for courses where it is not yet evident, ensuring that all programs include defined scope and sequences, essential questions, and aligned assessments (Foundational Element 2.2a). By developing consistent structures for interdisciplinary coordination and vertical articulation, the school will ensure a guaranteed and viable curriculum for every learner.

Visiting Team Response - Nathan Hale-Ray High School has identified the establishment of a formal, school-wide curriculum cycle as one of its Priority Areas for Growth, reflecting its commitment to the Principles 2.2, 2.3, and 3.4. While the district currently uses the Atlas curriculum management system, the school recognizes the need for a cohesive, systematic plan to update and align all units of study with the evolving vision of the learner.

Suggested Action Steps

- Conduct an audit of the status of curriculum development for every course in every department (e.g., not started, in progress, drafted, reviewed with feedback, revised, ready for publication)
- Develop a timeline for completing all curricula
- Develop a set of elements that must be included in every curriculum document (e.g., a scope and sequence or curriculum map, units of study that contain expected course outcomes for each student, guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, formative assessments, assessments aligned with expected course outcomes, instructional strategies, and connections to the school's vision of a learner)
- Create structures and dedicated time for interdisciplinary coordination and vertical articulation across grade levels to ensure curriculum viability
- Train staff on effectively utilizing the Atlas management system to house and update curriculum documents
- Designate curriculum leads or writers in each department and provide them with protected time for curriculum documentation and vertical alignment work
- Incorporate explicit connections to the vision of a learner transferable skills into every unit plan
- Pilot the newly written curricula in selected courses and gather student/teacher feedback before a full rollout
- Establish protocols for utilizing student performance data (e.g., common assessment results) as the initial step in the curriculum review process
- Establish and formalize a clear, regular curriculum review cycle for all departments and content areas

Priority Area

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

Priority Area #3 Goal Statement: The school will ensure that all students receive appropriate intervention strategies to support their academic, social, and emotional success by creating a formal tiered system of support for identified and non-identified students and developing a formal, defined process to identify and refer students

who need additional assistance (4.1a, 4.1).

School Response - To strengthen alignment with Standard 4 (Learning Support), Nathan Hale-Ray High School will prioritize the formalization of a school-wide tiered system of academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports (Foundational Element 4.1a). Although multiple effective interventions—such as RISES, Saturday School, and the student alternate support (SAS) program—are currently in place, they are not yet organized within a consistently defined framework. We aim to establish shared tier definitions, clear entry and exit criteria, and uniform progress-monitoring procedures. This initiative will also include the development of a consistent, formal referral process across all grade levels to ensure equitable access and timely intervention for all students.

Visiting Team Response - Nathan Hale-Ray High School has identified the formalization of a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) as one of its Priority Areas for Growth in alignment with Foundational Element 4.1a and Principle 4.1. While the school has a range of interventions and services available, these supports are not yet organized within a consistently defined framework.

Suggested Action Steps

- Develop a consistent, formal referral process across all grade levels
- Establish shared, school-wide definitions for each tier of academic, behavioral, and social-emotional support
- Determine and communicate clear entry and exit criteria for students utilizing MTSS interventions
- Implement uniform progress-monitoring procedures and data collection tools across all MTSS tiers
- Provide professional learning for all staff on the formalized MTSS framework, including tier definitions, criteria, and their roles in the system
- Audit existing intervention programs to determine where they fit within the three-tiered MTSS structure
- Develop a communication plan to inform parents and students about the MTSS process, available supports, and progress monitoring methods
- Allocate specific personnel to oversee the consistent implementation and data analysis of the formalized MTSS framework
- Establish a schedule for regular MTSS team meetings to review student data, determine next steps, and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

Priority Area

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

Priority Area #4 Goal Statement: The professional staff will develop systems, processes, and protocols to enable educators to individually and collaboratively examine a range of evidence of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, and programs and services (3.3).

School Response - As part of the commitment to Standard 3 (Professional Practices), Hale-Ray will focus on the systematic use of data to drive decision-making regarding teaching and learning. While grade-level teams and PLCs currently engage in collaborative work, the school identifies a growth area in moving toward a consistent protocol for examining student learning data to adjust instructional practices. This priority involves aligning professional development directly with student performance trends and school improvement goals to maximize impact on student outcomes. By fostering a culture of action research and collaborative inquiry, the school will ensure that professional learning is purposefully designed to address the unique needs of the Hale-Ray student body.

Visiting Team Response - Nathan Hale-Ray High School has identified the systematic use of data to drive instructional decision-making as a key priority in alignment with Standard 3 (Professional Practices). While grade-level teams and PLCs currently engage in meaningful collaborative work, the school recognizes a Priority Area for Growth in establishing consistent protocols for examining student learning data and using those findings to adjust and refine instructional practices. This priority includes aligning professional development directly with student performance trends and school improvement goals to ensure that professional learning has a purposeful and measurable impact on student outcomes. By fostering a school-wide culture of action research and

collaborative inquiry, Nathan Hale-Ray High School is committed to ensuring that professional learning is intentionally designed to address the unique and evolving needs of its student body.

Suggested Action Steps

- Develop and implement a consistent protocol for grade-level teams and PLCs to regularly examine student learning data and inform instructional adjustments
- Systematically align professional development opportunities directly with identified student performance trends and school improvement goals
- Establish a school-wide process to foster a culture of action research and collaborative inquiry among staff
- Expand instructional coaching capacity to support teacher growth and cross-disciplinary instructional practices
- Ensure professional learning is purposefully designed to address the unique needs of the Hale-Ray student body
- Provide training for all PLC/grade-level teams on the use of data analysis tools to disaggregate student performance results by relevant subgroups to identify equity gaps
- Formalize a feedback loop where findings from PLC data analysis directly influence the planning and content of future professional development sessions
- Implement a system for teachers to formally share and reflect on the instructional adjustments made based on data analysis and their impact on student outcomes

Commendations

Commendation

The school's inclusive culture that fosters strong, positive staff-student relationships, supported by high expectations for both staff and students

Commendation

The authentic learning experiences, like the Sugar Shack and engineering workshops, and the wide range of elective courses and clubs that connect coursework to real-world applications and promote student engagement

Commendation

The staff's demonstrated commitment to continuous professional growth through formal and informal learning that contributes to a collaborative culture of shared expertise and reflection

Commendation

The school's commitment to equity and ensuring that students from historically underrepresented groups have broad access to academic, co-curricular, and CTE opportunities

Commendation

The effective, comprehensive system of integrated student support (academic, social-emotional, health, counseling) offered by the school

Commendation

The broad range of certified professionals, including counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, special education staff, and a library media specialist, that ensures students have access to expert, specialized support

Commendation

The wide variety of CTE programs (including agriculture, robotics, manufacturing, and family and consumer science) that offers diverse and meaningful opportunities for learning and career exploration

Commendation

School leaders who consistently demonstrate professionalism and high standards, fostering a strong, positive culture and climate

Commendation

The district's ongoing investments in technology infrastructure, wireless connectivity, and classroom instructional tools that support modern teaching practices and equitable digital access for students and staff

Commendation

The school's development of strong, productive relationships with the community, businesses, and higher education institutions to support authentic student learning experiences

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

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

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

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

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES Commission on Public Schools

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

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

Roster of Team Members

Chair(s)

Co-Chair: Heather Taylor - Putnam High School

Co-Chair: Mark Ambruso - Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School

Team Members

Katie Amenta - Berlin High School

Gina Juliano - Connecticut River Academy at Goodwin University

Dennis Mennillo Jr. - Thomaston High School