

**New England Association of
Schools and Colleges**



Commission on Public Secondary Schools

**Report of the Visiting Committee for
Milford High School & Applied Technology Center**

Milford, New Hampshire

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STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

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

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

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

- Teaching and Learning Standards
 - Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations
 - Curriculum
 - Instruction
 - Assessment of and for Student Learning

- Support of Teaching and Learning Standards
 - School Culture and Leadership
 - School Resources for Learning
 - Community Resources for Learning.

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

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Study

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Milford High School & Applied Technology Center (hereafter referenced as Milford High School) a committee of seven faculty members and the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities and facilities available for young people.

Milford High School's self-study extended over a period of 36 months from October 2011 to October 2014. The visiting committee was pleased to note that students, parents, and school board members joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

Public schools evaluated by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their adherence to the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the school's mission, learning expectations, and unique student population. In addition to using the Self-Study Guides developed by a representative group of New England educators and approved by the Committee, Milford High School also used questionnaires developed by The Research Center at Endicott College to reflect the concepts contained in the Standards for Accreditation.

These materials provided discussion items for a comprehensive assessment of the school by the professional staff during the self-study.

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Committee

A visiting committee of 14 evaluators was assigned by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Milford High School. The Committee members spent four days in Milford, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students and parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school meets the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented public schools, and central office administration, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Milford High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 37 hours shadowing 28 students for a half day
- a total of 14 hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)
- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facility
- individual meetings with 28 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers
- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

Each conclusion in the report resulted from visiting committee consensus. Sources of evidence for each conclusion of the visiting committee appear in parentheses in the Standards sections of the report. The seven Standards for Accreditation reports include commendations and recommendations that, in the visiting committee's judgment, will help the school as it works to improve teaching and learning and better to meet Committee Standards.

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

School and Community Profile

The town of Milford, New Hampshire, located in Hillsborough County, was incorporated in 1794. Long associated with the granite industry, Milford is often referred to as the “Granite Town” in the “Granite State.” The granite used to fashion the columns on the Treasury Building in Washington, D.C. and the granite used to carve the cupids on the staircase at the Library of Congress came from Milford. The town was a prime stop on the Underground Railroad. Harriet Wilson, born in Milford, is widely considered the first published female African-American author. Her book *Our Nig*, a portrait of pre-Civil War racism in the North was first released in 1859. A statue of Harriet Wilson and her son is located in Railroad Pond Park.

Today, Milford boasts a thriving downtown area nicknamed “The Oval” that has undergone intensive restoration and renovation, and serves as the hub of community activity. Local citizens and regional tourists frequent the revitalized town’s center known for its restaurants, shops, concerts, art festivals, and seasonal celebrations. Milford also provides extensive recreational activities for its residents at a number of public parks and fields. Milford’s location provides easy, convenient access to Boston, to New Hampshire’s seacoast and lakes, and to attractions throughout New England.

According to the latest estimate, Milford has a population of 15,200, making it the sixteenth-largest municipality in the state. Milford is part of the Nashua, New Hampshire Metro Labor Market Area. The town’s per capita income in 2012 was \$31,737, and the median household income was reported as \$82,443, which is \$17,518 above the state’s median household income of \$64,925. In the same year, it was also reported that 4.5 percent of Milford families were living under the poverty line. Milford’s unemployment rate of 4.4 percent is slightly lower than the state rate of 4.8 percent. The Milford Board of Selectmen, a five-member body, governs the town. Major Milford employers include several large manufacturing and technology firms.

Milford High School serves students in grades 9 through 12. Although the vast majority of students are from Milford, the school also welcomes students from the small town of Mason, who attend through a tuition agreement. Students from several other surrounding school districts attend on a part-time basis, taking career and technical education courses through the Region 16 Regional Agreement.

In addition to the high school, Milford School District includes the Sage School (an off-site, alternative middle and high school that serves grades 6-12), Jacques Memorial Elementary School (kindergarten and grade 1), Heron Pond Elementary School (grades 2-5), and Milford Middle School (grades 6-8). As of May 1, 2014, the district’s total student population was 2,611. The most recent ethnic self-identification records reported to the state indicate that white non-Hispanics make up 90.3 percent of the district’s student population, followed by Hispanics (3.5 percent), multi-race (3 percent), Asian or Pacific Islanders (1.6 percent), black non-Hispanics (1.4 percent), and American Indians or Alaskan natives (0.2 percent).

According to the New Hampshire Department of Education, Milford School District’s average spending per pupil in the 2012-2013 school year was \$12,644, lower than the state average of \$13,459. At the high school level, average spending per pupil was \$13,388, very close to the state average of \$13,490. The 2014-15 district operating budget was set at \$37,300,923, and the high school operating budget was set at \$5,899,932. The estimated school tax rate for 2014 (state and local combined) is \$19.57 per \$1,000 of valuation, based on the budget, estimated revenues, and estimated property valuation.

An elected school board, consisting of five members who appoint the superintendent of schools, governs the Milford School District. The previous superintendent was Robert Suprenant, who served

from 2004 until 2015, when the current superintendent, Robert Marquis, began his term. The school board in conjunction with the superintendent of schools establishes educational policies, while policies and associated procedures are implemented by district and building administration and staff.

Milford High School's enrollment as of May 1, 2014 was 827, consisting of 436 males and 391 females. Twenty-eight additional students from other districts were attending on a part-time basis, taking Applied Technology Center courses. Of the total high school population as of April 15, 2014, 110 students were identified as receiving special education services, and 71 students were on 504 plans. The most recent average annual dropout rate (2012-2013) was 0.67 percent, below the state average of 1.31 percent, and the MHS four-year cumulative dropout rate for the same period was 2.65 percent, approximately half of the state rate of 5.14 percent. According to the New Hampshire Department of Education, Milford's 2012-2013 graduation rate was 88.9 percent, above the state average of 86.7 percent. The attendance rate for students at Milford High School in 2012-2013 was 93.4 percent, close to the state rate of 93.6 percent.

Milford High School operates on a 4x4 block schedule model, with the semesters changing in late January. The vast majority of students take four 90-minute courses a day. Minimum yearly enrollment requirements are seven and a half credits for students in grades 9 and 10, seven for students in grade 11, and six for those in grade 12. Full-time teachers instruct three classes per day and have one unencumbered preparation block in addition to a lunch period.

There are 82 certified, professional staff members at Milford High School, creating a student-teacher ratio of just over 10:1. With a teaching staff of 66, the student-teacher ratio is 13:1. As of May 1, 2014, the average class size was just under 18, with an average teacher load of 54 students per semester. Average class sizes in core academic areas were 18 in English, 17.4 in math, 16.7 in science, and 19 in social studies. Milford High School is in session for 180 school days per year, including examination days in January and June. The first day every year is devoted to freshman orientation. Teachers are contracted for 187 days.

Milford High School offers extensive and comprehensive programming in academic, technical, arts, and wellness courses. Academic programs are leveled (honors, standard, and supported) in required core areas, while most elective academic courses as well as those in technical studies, the arts and wellness are not leveled; therefore, students with various strengths study together in non-leveled classes. Advanced placement (AP) courses are offered in 13 areas, including science, English, mathematics, social studies, computer science and art. A total of 27 honors courses are offered. Remedial academic programming is available to students in the form of credit recovery classes and summer school offerings.

Students are required to have 26 credits to graduate with a Milford High School diploma. Of those credits, four must be earned in English, four in mathematics, three each in science and social studies, and one each in technology, arts, physical education, and health. Of the remaining eight elective credits, two must be in the student's career focus area. In addition to the regular diploma, students may apply for a New Hampshire Scholars Diploma, requiring additional course work in some areas as well as attainment of designated academic benchmarks. Students in special circumstances may apply for a State Minimum Standards Diploma, requiring only 20 credits. A student's grade-point average (and corresponding class rank) is computed using the final grades of courses and weighting the grades according to the level designations in their titles (i.e., standard, honors) in mathematics, English, science, social studies, world languages, biotechnology, computer technology, and pre-engineering.

Milford High School has a full-time career development specialist who works with students individually, and offers classroom presentations and organized career days. These resources deliver an

extensive career and workforce development curriculum that is based on state and national competencies. Additionally, relationships are formed with local businesses and agencies whereby students are placed in credit-bearing career focus internships. For these, students are simultaneously enrolled in an internship class, and then share their experiences with fellow students and staff in capstone presentations. Many other non-traditional Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs) are offered, including independent internships, job shadowing and community-service learning, work study/cooperative education, on-line/virtual education, and independent/directed study.

The high school also offers students 26 courses that carry dual high school/college credits. The college credit is documented with a college transcript. Currently, Milford collaborates with two post-secondary institutions. The Running Start Program is the dual enrollment program run through the Community College System of New Hampshire, and Southern New Hampshire University. Milford students can begin their post-secondary education and careers by earning college credit while in high school.

In the class of 2013, 43 percent of graduates went on to attend four-year colleges, while 20 percent attended two-year schools. On average for the past five years (2009-2013), 45 percent of graduates went on to four-year colleges, and 27 percent matriculated at two-year colleges. Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) average super-scores for the class of 2013 were 534 in critical reading, 531 in math, and 522 in writing. Five-year SAT averages (2009-2013) were 520 in critical reading, 520 in math, and 507 in writing. In the fall of 2013, New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) tests were administered to grade 11 students in reading, mathematics, and writing. Mean scale scores and percent proficient for Milford High School students exceeded state results in both reading and mathematics, and matched state results in writing. As part of a new initiative, the costs of Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) and AP examinations are borne by the Milford School District.

Milford High School offers 40 co-curricular activities and 27 varsity sports. A total of 37 teams exist - 19 boys' teams, 15 girls' teams, and three coed teams. In the 2013-14 school year, 49 percent of students participated in at least one co-curricular activity, and 52 percent participated in at least one sport. A student advisory program, which meets every other week, has become a vehicle for the discussion of timely topics, organization of community service efforts, and implementation of efficient rollouts of routine annual events, such as course registration. Milford High School welcomes four international students each year.

In addition to full participation in the New England Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation process, the Milford School District and Milford High School participate in goal setting and strategic planning on many levels. School staff, parents, community members, and local businesses all are surveyed as part of our Local Educational Improvement Plan (LEIP) development. The Milford School Board sets annual goals for itself, and the superintendent recommends an additional set of annual school district goals, which are adopted by the school board. Progress on school district goals is formally and publicly reported, and these results become part of the superintendent's annual evaluation. In a similar process, building goals are developed by each school's administrative team. Progress on those goals is a key part of administrator evaluation and merit pay assignment. Teachers also develop annual goals in consultation with an administrator as part of the professional development cycle.

Milford High School encourages parental participation in their children's education. Open house events, school newsletters, booster clubs, and various college planning-related presentations help to strengthen the school-parent relationship. Parents have unfettered access to student attendance records and academic records via PowerSchool, the school's student-management software.

Milford High School recognizes students for their achievements in a variety of ways. Honor rolls are published quarterly, and each month a “student of the month” is named for significant contributions to the school. Eleventh-grade students with grade point averages (GPAs) of 3.5 or higher are invited to apply for membership in the National Honor Society. Honor societies in music, art, and technical studies similarly acknowledge student success. Milford High School students who receive National Merit Competition recognition are cited in the local press. Student achievements in all departments are celebrated at an annual school-wide awards assembly. An annual scholarship night is held in June. In 2013, more than \$115,000 in scholarships was awarded to members of the senior class. Seasonal co-curricular award ceremonies and banquets are held throughout the year. The morning announcements also serve as a means to recognize further student and staff accomplishments. Annual celebrations, such as Spirit Week and Spring Fling, reinforce and promote a positive school climate.

Milford High School
&
Applied Technology Center:
Statement of Core Values and Beliefs
21st Century Expectations for Learning

Statement of Core Values and Beliefs:

Milford High School is a community of diverse students, faculty, staff, administrators, parents and local citizens who foster a safe, respectful culture in a supportive environment that promotes equal opportunity for high-quality education. We believe well-educated citizens are prepared to contribute responsibly in their civic, social and career endeavors. Our school community works collaboratively to provide a rigorous and varied curriculum and to engage all students in authentic experiences, which motivate them to achieve their potential. Thus prepared, students go forth as well informed, critical thinkers who keep pace with the advancements of the 21st century and contribute positively in a dynamic and competitive world.

All students will demonstrate the attributes of the following academic, civic, and social expectations for student learning:

Academic Expectations:

1. Knowledgeable Person:

- a. Acquires, integrates and applies essential knowledge from each content area.
- b. Communicates knowledge clearly with consideration to audience, purpose and discipline.
- c. Reads and listens with comprehension to complex material across disciplines.
- d. Employs technology and uses digital media strategically and effectively as research and communication tools.

2. Complex Thinker:

- a. Gathers and share information and evidence using a variety of techniques and resources.
- b. Selects and uses appropriate tools and strategies to evaluate, analyze and critique information and to make decisions and solve problems.
- c. Applies analytical and abstract reasoning skills to solve problems appropriately.
- d. Utilizes core knowledge in increasingly complex 21st century real-world applications.

3. Self-Directed Learner:

- a. Creates positive goals and establishes career pathways.
- b. Monitors progress toward goals independently with self-discipline and perseverance.
- c. Seeks diverse perspectives from a range of resources before selecting a course of action.

4. Quality Producer:

- a. Utilizes, analyzes and cites appropriate sources.
- b. Incorporates theory and best practices into all works produced.
- c. Creates or constructs products with precision and accuracy that meet or exceed all established criteria.
- d. Monitors and evaluates own work, responds appropriately to feedback and suitably modifies products.
- e. Expresses individuality and originality in his or her work.

Social Expectations:

- a. Demonstrates awareness of choices and consequences through personal reflection.
- b. Accepts personal responsibility in individual and collaborative environments.
- c. Employs a positive work ethic with integrity.
- d. Demonstrates appropriate etiquette in a variety of social interactions.
- e. Communicates respectfully and with discretion.

Civic Expectations:

- a. Actively contributes to the creation and sustainment of a community of respect and tolerance.
- b. Develops sense of civic consciousness by understanding how political processes affect all aspects of life.
- c. Actively participates as an informed citizen.
- d. Challenges established norms appropriately.

**COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

CORE VALUES, BELIEFS, AND LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

CURRICULUM

INSTRUCTION

ASSESSMENT OF AND FOR STUDENT
LEARNING

1**Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations**

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

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

Conclusions

Milford High School engaged in a dynamic and collaborative process informed by current research-based best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about 21st century learning; however, the design process did not include all stakeholders in the school community. The current core values and beliefs statement was developed over four months during the 2011-2012 school year. The principal solicited two teachers who had served on the Local Education Improvement Plan Committee, to lead a committee of teachers and paraprofessionals in developing the core values statement during several highly collaborative work sessions. In March 2012, the faculty voted unanimously to approve the statement. According to the Endicott survey, parents and students indicate high levels of familiarity with the core values and beliefs of the school (77.3 percent and 82.2 percent, respectively) and parents report that those core values and beliefs represent the community values about student learning (83.4 percent), with members of the parent panel speaking to the essence of this statement, although they could not quote them directly. Endicott Survey results indicate that students and parents felt comfortable with opportunities provided them to comment on the document. Likewise, although the core values and beliefs are consistent with the Milford school board's vision and belief statements and were informed by the Local Education Improvement Plan, the school board had no direct role in the process. While the school staff developed the core values and beliefs collaboratively and committed to them, a process that includes meaningful input from all stakeholders will ensure fuller understanding of and commitment to the core values and beliefs. (panel presentation, self-study, Core Values Standard Subcommittee, parents, self-study timeline, self-study meeting notes, Endicott survey)

The staff of Milford High School collectively identified challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies and are defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted levels of achievement. On November 6, 2012, the staff initiated the process of aligning existing student expectations for learning with the newly revised and adopted statement of core values and beliefs. In order to develop 21st century learning expectations that support essential elements of college and career readiness, staff repeated the earlier collaborative process. Staff reorganized into small representative groups and participated in a series of professional development days (January 22, February 6, and March 12, 2013) facilitated by teacher leaders. The faculty adopted unanimously the final version of the academic competencies on February 6, 2013. In June 2013, the faculty unanimously approved the social and civic competencies. According to the Endicott survey, 60.5 percent of the students, 68 percent of the staff, and 74.4 percent of the parents agree that the school's 21st century learning expectations are indeed challenging. Based on these learning expectations, on October 11, 2013, the staff initiated the process of developing school-wide analytic rubrics. Teacher leaders facilitated professional development on the topic of rubric design, use, and benefits toward student learning. In creating the school-wide rubrics, staff identified targeted levels of student achievement: beginning, developing, accomplished, and exemplary. The revised school-wide analytic rubrics were approved and adopted on February 20, 2014. The Endicott survey indicates that 67.9 percent of students agree that they are familiar with the school-wide rubrics which teachers use to assess assignments and other classwork. Seventy-six percent of staff agrees that the school has adopted school-wide analytic rubrics that define all of the 21st century learning expectations, and 89.2 percent of parents know and understand the level of learning that students must demonstrate to meet the school's learning expectations. Teachers in all learning areas currently report student achievement based on the school-wide rubrics, which appear as report card comments at the end of each semester. After three semesters of assessing student achievement of the 21st century learning expectations in this manner, inconsistencies in reporting the data do exist. Because of this, staff has not reviewed the overall student data. The school administration is exploring other ways of reporting student achievement of the 21st century learning expectations to make the data viable. Once individual student reporting measures are formalized, and the data is reviewed and disaggregated, the school will be able to assess its school-wide achievement of the 21st century learning expectations and academic, social and civic competencies and share its

findings with all school stakeholders. (self-study, Endicott survey, school-wide rubrics, teacher interviews, student support services, school website, Core Values Standard Subcommittee, school administrators)

The culture of Milford High School actively reflects its core values, beliefs, and learning expectations and these values have begun to inform and drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in classrooms, as well as school-wide policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations. The school fully lives its core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Myriad programs, resources, and extracurricular activities create and reinforce a safe, respectful, and inclusive culture. For example, the Best Buddies program and Unified Basketball team connect diverse students; wrap-around services support struggling students; the Couch Potato club promotes inclusion; the Young Kasamas club promotes community respect; and the Distributive Education store (school store) promotes school spirit. Students access a full range of academic and extended learning opportunities. For example, supporting the school's strong focus on career readiness, students can take career technical education classes at the Applied Technology Center or undertake an internship with a community business, and students in the special education program can participate in the work-based learning program. The student handbook is reviewed annually and discussed with students at the beginning of the school year. All students can choose from a full range of academic courses that encourage new interests, including courses from dynamic theater and fine arts programs. As the heart of the school, the media center is a welcoming and vibrant space for students to interact in constructive ways. Throughout the school and the school day, faculty and staff create a caring, nurturing environment for students, making personal connections and encouraging them to explore their interests and achieve their potential. Most teachers have begun to use school-wide rubrics to measure student progress toward achieving the 21st century learning expectations; however, the school has not yet developed processes for systematically adjusting or improving curriculum, instruction, and assessment. As a result, while elements of the core beliefs, values, and learning expectations exist in the academic life of the school, they are not consistent across the school. Likewise, the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations play an informal role in guiding policy, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations. The school consciously attempts to maintain its culture, but there are no formal processes for collecting or using data on the values, beliefs, and learning expectations to influence policy, procedures, decision, and resource allocations. As the Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations reflected in the school culture take full effect in driving decisions throughout the school, students will have increased numbers of purposeful opportunities to achieve their potential. (self-study, Core Values Standard Subcommittee, classroom observations, student work, teacher interviews, school administrators, library/ media specialists)

Milford High School has an informal and limited plan to review and revise its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, and multiple data sources, as well as on district and school community priorities. According to the self-study and confirmed by the Core Values Standard Subcommittee, Milford High School anticipates reviewing its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations through the process of the next New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation cycle. The self-study also indicates that teachers, administrators, and other staff will continue to meet within their departments, as well as through other relevant processes and venues, to discuss how to incorporate the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations into the classroom and to discuss where they need additional work. However, the Core Values Standard Subcommittee indicated that a formal review plan is not in place at this time. In November 2010, the school used the Local Education Improvement Plan (LEIP) in the development of its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. The seven-year cycle associated with the LEIP offers the school an opportunity through a committee of representative stakeholders to review its core values and beliefs, and to report student achievement based on the 21st century learning expectations. Milford High School has an active career workforce committee that has representation from each of the four core academic areas administration, student services and the Applied Technology Center. This committee meets regu-

larly with business partners. Additionally, a number of faculty mentors oversee internships for students. The school's 21st century learning expectations align somewhat with specific district and school goals, as noted. The district goals for 2015-16 state, "Curriculum and Instruction: Providing each student with the knowledge, skills and tools needed to succeed in a rapidly changing global environment." The school leadership goals for 2015-16 state, "Host a successful NEASC visit and initiate follow-up procedures." The school's recognition of the need to review and revise its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations informed by multiple constituency groups and based on data and research will result in a clearly-defined process and a current and relevant statement of values and expectations to guide the school. (self-study, student support services, Core Values Standard Subcommittee, teacher interviews, school administrators)

Commendations:

1. The school culture and climate that promote equal opportunity and contribute to student success
2. The safe, respectful school environment that fosters responsibility and collaboration
3. The collaborative processes teacher leaders and staff followed in creating the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, which led to "consensus, not compromise"
4. The autonomy afforded the staff during the development of the core values, beliefs, and 21st learning expectations

Recommendations:

1. Provide opportunities for students and parents to participate in the review and revision of the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations
2. Engage school board and community members actively in discussions involving the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations
3. Fully integrate the use of the analytic rubrics that define the levels of student achievement toward the 21st century learning expectations in all classes
4. Formalize processes for reporting, reviewing, and disaggregating student achievement data on the 21st century learning expectations to ensure that the Core Values and student data drive curriculum, instruction, assessment and inform school practices, policies and allotment of resources
5. Use the core values and data on student achievement of the 21st century learning expectations to drive curriculum, instruction, assessment, and to inform school policies, practices, and the allotment of resources

2

Curriculum

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

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

Conclusions

The curriculum of Milford High School is purposefully designed through an organic, teacher-led process to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations. In December 2011, two teachers led development of the Milford High School document outlining their core values and beliefs. In November 2012, these core values were aligned with the 21st century learning expectations. Corresponding school-wide rubrics were developed in 2013. These documents were approved and adopted by the MHS staff in March 2014. Currently, each curriculum area is responsible for implementing the expectations; each teacher is expected to include one school-wide rubric on two different assessments throughout the year. Teachers choose which rubrics to include. Responsibility for implementation is shared among all departments. Oversight and implementation of the curriculum occurs at the departmental level, as well as through departmental representative meeting every two weeks with the Director of Academic Studies. The school does not have a formal process for collecting and reviewing data regarding the learning expectations. This makes it difficult to reach informed decisions about adding or deleting courses from the curriculum. In a few instances, units of study have been added, deleted, or modified based on data from learning expectations. However, teachers and administrators report that most decisions about adding, deleting, or modifying courses result from discussions among department members and from student input. Also, it is not clear in most curricula where students specifically and routinely practice 21st century learning expectations. Although the expectations are listed on many curriculum guides, they are not always tied to specific units or areas of study. Students (67.9 percent) say they are familiar with the school-wide rubrics as assessments; 76 percent of teachers say they are familiar with them. Teachers share responsibility for teaching the learning expectations, and they understand their role in doing so. The curriculum is designed to ensure that some students in some courses practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations. According to the Endicott survey, 68 percent of students believe the curriculum design ensures that students practice and achieve the school's learning expectations. With more purposeful design of the school's curricula, more students will practice and achieve each of the 21st century learning expectations in a measureable way. (self-study, students, student work, teachers, department leaders)

Some of the curriculum is written in a common format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, skills, and assessment practices; however, the school's 21st century learning expectations, and instructional strategies that include the use of school-wide analytic rubrics are not part of any written curriculum. Curriculum guides exist for most courses, but they do not provide all necessary information. Although discrepancies exist between guides posted on the district's website and hard copies of the curriculum, such as six courses not being listed in the online guides, the current written curriculum is up to date and administration and faculty follow regularly a process for review and revision of the curriculum. While electronic records on the district web site have not been revised, the paper records used consistently among departments have been updated for content and format, although most do not include 21st century learning expectations or instructional strategies. In some cases, the curriculum guides identify course content and learning expectations. For example, the curriculum guides in the math, science, and social studies indicate core standards, key concepts, unit topics, essential questions, and core assessments. The student expectation(s) for the entire course are indicated at the bottom of the guides. In English, the curriculum guides are somewhat different, showing the core standards, key concepts, unit topics, and essential questions; however, there are no student expectations listed. All English

guides include a copy of the NH Common Core Standards for English/language arts (ELA). Curriculum guides in the Applied Technology Center (ATC) sometimes include the 21st century learning expectations but do not include connections between course content and those expectations. Teachers are familiar with the purpose of the guides, and 66.7 percent of them report that they use them. However, in order for curriculum guides to be most effective, they need to be consistent across all courses and need to include essential questions, concepts, content, skills, 21st century learning expectations, instructional strategies and assessment practices that include the use of school wide analytic and course-specific rubrics. It is evident that a standard blank template has been used to write most of the curriculum. This template includes 21st century learning expectations but they are not clearly labeled so are difficult to follow. School-wide rubrics based on core values and beliefs for the school have been developed in the following four categories: knowledgeable person, complex thinker, self-directed learner and quality producers. Teachers (66.7 percent) report that these rubrics are used across curricula. Teachers reported that the expectations require the use of rubrics, to include school-wide rubrics, on two assignments each school year. Initial development of curriculum maps has occurred in non-Applied Technology Center courses, and departments such as math have made more progress than others. Math teachers reported that they meet regularly to discuss, review, align and revise their curriculum. In other areas, more time and training is needed to develop and complete robust curriculum guides. When all guides contain the necessary components, including 21st century learning expectations and consistent instructional strategies across all curricula, the curriculum will ensure all students receive high quality instruction. (self-study, student work, teachers, department leaders, Endicott survey)

The curriculum has begun to include a number of examples of emphasizing depth of understanding and application of knowledge through a variety of practices. Examples of this include but are not limited to AP courses, Running-Start courses, and most honors-level courses. Milford High School has pockets of good implementation of written curriculum in which higher order thinking and application of knowledge is apparent. However, the written curriculum does not emphasize depth of knowledge uniformly, depth of understanding or application of knowledge through inquiry and problem solving, higher order thinking, cross-disciplinary learning, authentic learning opportunities, or informed and ethical use of technology. Curriculum guides at Milford High School are written in a format that is not consistent across courses. These guides include essential questions, concepts, content, and in some places assessments. However, none of the guides include inquiry and problem-solving skills, higher order thinking, cross-disciplinary learning, authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school, or informed use of technology. Some classroom observations identified rigor, higher order thinking and application of skills in courses such as science and photography. American studies classes included cross-curricular activities and clear evidence exists for cross-curricular coordination between English and internship classes. A majority (56 percent) of the staff agrees that cross-disciplinary learning takes place at Milford High School. It is clear that rigor, higher order thinking and application of knowledge exist in many, but not all, classrooms. When depth of understanding, application of knowledge, inquiry and problem solving, higher order thinking, cross-disciplinary learning, authentic learning opportunities and informed and ethical use of technology become part of all written curriculum documents and develop across all disciplines, then all students will share in opportunities to become 21st century learners. (classroom observations, student shadowing, teacher interviews, Endicott survey)

Milford High School has a written curriculum guide for all courses, efforts are in place to ensure alignment between written and taught curriculum. Administrators cite implementation of unit plans and teacher observations as the primary means used to collect evidence of alignment between written and taught curriculum. Staff report at 78.7 percent that the written and taught curriculum is aligned. Students involved in the internship program produce reflective evidence of their work as part of their final assessment. This expectation demonstrates clear alignment between written and taught curriculum. Many teachers use common assessments. These assessments help teachers to align written curriculum to taught curriculum in order to prepare students for summary assessments. Student self-assessments, as well as the common assessments shared within many departments, demonstrate clear alignment. With Milford High School's on-going efforts to align the written and taught curricula, student achievement will be optimized. (classroom observations, self-study, teacher interviews, department leaders, Endicott survey, curriculum documents)

Vertical articulation exists among most academic areas within the school and vertical and curricular coordination exists between the high school and sending schools, that makes Milford High School effective in its curricular coordination. There is evidence of curricular coordination within departments at Milford High School. There is also evidence between the school and its sending schools, as well as clear vertical articulation throughout the Milford School District. Coordination exists in most departments, most notably in the math department. Teachers share work in common classes including lessons and assessments. They also make vertical planning a priority from one course to another. This work is ongoing throughout each year. English, science, and health classes also coordinate some of their curricula within their departments, although to a lesser degree. According to staff, 56 percent believe that there is cross-disciplinary learning, and documentation suggests collaboration of that claim. Ongoing efforts to maintain vertical articulation among all schools in the district exist. At least twice each year, representatives from the elementary, middle, and high schools meet to coordinate their curricula. Each spring, teachers and administrators from the middle school and Milford High School convene to ensure a smooth transition from grade 8 to grade 9. Curriculum teams are developed in such a way that they represent members from K-12. Curriculum guides also provide some evidence of vertical articulation between grade levels, especially in English and some world language courses. In addition, social studies plans to revise its curriculum next year. In anticipation of the review cycle, two elementary, two middle school and two high school teachers have been identified to participate in that committee work. For all departments, curriculum guides show little integration among academic areas of the school. Milford High School shows some clear evidence of vertical articulation among all schools within the district as well as articulation and coordination among most departments and sending schools which is beneficial for students transitioning between grades that benefits the majority of students. (teacher interviews, teachers, department leaders, school leadership, Endicott survey)

Milford High School equips teachers with adequate staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies and facilities in order for teachers to implement their curriculum. However, Milford High School does not ensure that teachers receive sufficient time and professional development to train in use of new equipment. There is open access to co-curricular programs, with approximately 75 percent of students participating. Milford High School has one of the few co-curricular programs in New Hampshire not charging a user fee for participation. Some instances of lacking stipends for advisors do exist, however. Staff (38.7 percent) agree or strongly agree that funding is adequate for these ar-

reas. The student-to-teacher ratio is 13:1. In core classes, enrollments range from 4 to 26 per class. Almost all observed classes had 20 or fewer students. These reasonably sized classes allow personalized instruction and implementation of curriculum. Teachers report sufficient materials such as textbooks, and other instructional hands-on materials for implementation of the curriculum in all disciplines. The school provides adequate technology to implement the curriculum. For example, most teachers are provided with SMARTBoards and projectors. Many teachers have document cameras. While MHS provides this technology, teachers reported a lack of professional development necessary to implement this technology in the classroom. While ATC teachers are generally well-equipped, some classrooms are in need of upgraded equipment such as SMARTBoards and document cameras. Teachers and administrators reported that there is sufficient equipment present in classrooms such as the science labs (i.e., chemicals, glassware) Milford High School has three computer labs. Students and teachers reported that most computers work, but that connectivity is problematic. Wireless Internet access within the building often fluctuates. MHS has developed a plan to introduce Chromebooks to all students. This year, three teachers are piloting the plan; each has a cart of 30 Chromebooks for classroom use. These teachers are also using a variety of Google tools, with the plan eventually to convert the entire school to Google Apps for Education. With improved technology tools and an updated wireless system, Milford High School will be able to implement fully the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities. (classroom observations, student shadowing, panel presentation, department leaders, school leadership)

The district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research, although communication of that availability may not be clear to all staff. Milford High School staff is especially limited in time and resources for curriculum development. As a result, the curriculum is limited in its adequacy to provide all students with the opportunity to practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Staff report a 77.3 percent direct involved in curriculum review, evaluation, and revision, while 46.6 percent report that they have adequate time to engage in these pursuits. This discrepancy suggests the lack of clear communication of resources mentioned above. MHS has a curriculum committee composed of teachers from each curricular area, as well as guidance personnel and administrators. The curriculum committee meets bi-weekly to discuss issues related to all curricular areas. However, insufficient time exists to collaborate adequately on curriculum coordination and articulation. Teachers reported that the majority of curriculum work is done after hours and usually is organized internally by department or common courses. Until recently, the curriculum for the school was overseen by the assistant superintendent; at the beginning of last year, a district established the position of Director of Curriculum and Instruction to provide more time and resources for curriculum revision going forward. The school district has a five-year curriculum review cycle that the school board adopted for one year recently. The social studies department is due next for the review cycle. Administration asserted that, over the past three years, allocation of funds for curriculum review and development has been inconsistent. Teachers reported allocation of both time and funding has been inadequate for their needs. Faculty reviews data in the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum in some departments more than others. The school board and administration have always granted release time for curriculum planning when staff request it. The lack of common planning time and dedicated workshop days, however, hinders curricular efforts in most departments, but the new Director of Curriculum and Instruction is working to increase time and opportunity. The

systemic use of data, materials, and professional resources does not yet exist. By establishing the position of director of curriculum and instruction, the district and MHS have made progress in this area. When the district provides additional dedicated time and financial support for curriculum development, evaluation, and revision, MHS will better ensure that its curriculum meets the needs of its students. (teacher interviews, central office administrators, school administrators, school leadership, central office support personnel, Endicott survey)

Commendations:

1. The math department's implementation and consistent review of curriculum guides by all teachers within their department
2. The cross-curricular alignment between English and internship classes
3. The improved coordination of curricular planning and development through the creation of a district director of curriculum and instruction position

Recommendations:

1. Improve the clarity of labeling and coordination of documents to show embedded 21st century learning expectations in all courses, skills, and assessments
2. Develop and implement a common format for written curriculum
3. Establish a process for data collection leading to review and revision of curriculum guides
4. Provide regular training in instructional technology to all staff members
5. Develop a plan to improve awareness of professional development and planning time available to all staff
6. Implement the curriculum review cycle as designed

3

Instruction

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

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

Conclusions

Milford High School has developed a set of core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations, and while some teachers have incorporated and review their instructional practices based on this document, the faculty as a whole continues the process of implementing the core values into their instruction. Teachers report meeting informally to review their instructional practices to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, but structured time to meet is not evident. Course syllabi each include at least one of the academic expectations from the core values statement for which that course has particular responsibility. The district director of curriculum and instruction and teachers reported that the district receives in-district training and opportunities to attend out-of-district trainings as a way to gain understanding of 21st century learning expectations. Administrators and the district director of curriculum and instruction reported that they meet with the teachers when new teaching strategies are being introduced, and then look for those strategies in use when observing classrooms. Teachers reported that additional trainings in instructional strategies, particularly relating to the use of technology, would be useful. Core values are new to the staff within the last two years, and they continue to incorporate these values as they become more familiar with them. The Endicott survey reports that 70.7 percent of Milford teachers continuously examine their instructional practices to ensure consistency with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. When professional practices for reviewing the core values and 21st century learning expectations become an integral part of professional practice for all teachers, the faculty will have more consistent opportunities to reflect on and improve instruction. (teachers, student work, student shadowing, self-study, Endicott survey)

The MHS faculty employs instructional practices that personalize instruction, engage students as active and self-directed learners, and apply knowledge and skills to authentic tasks helping students to own their learning. Many faculty members incorporate higher order thinking skills to support student achievement, and student self-assessment and reflection in order to assist students in understanding their progress. However, the faculty has achieved only partial integration of technology and cross-disciplinary instruction into their classroom practices. Teachers offer a broad range of topic selection within assignments to personalize instruction. Teachers assist personalization by identifying materials appropriate to student level and interest. According to the Endicott survey, only 35.1 percent of students recognize this emphasis, while 81.8 percent of students agree that teachers use a variety of methods to assess their learning. The 42.7 percent of students saying that teachers spend one-on-one time with them falls 2.4 percent higher than the New England average. Students participate as active and self-directed learners in projects that require hands-on approaches, student choice of topics of personal interest, and choosing a level of challenge within activities. On the Endicott survey, 62.4 percent of students indicate having choice of topics on assignments. Students apply their knowledge and skills to authentic tasks as numerous examples of project-based learning were evident in many classes. The Applied Technology Center (ATC) allows for real-life application of skills as students prepare for 21st century careers. Students may access extended learning opportunities (ELOs) and internships in the community.

Prevalent, but to a lesser degree, was an emphasis on inquiry, problem solving, and higher-order thinking skills. The Endicott Survey shows that 88 percent of students agree that teachers emphasize these techniques, while classroom visits and student interviews reported less use of higher order thinking skills, but there was little concrete evidence to refute the survey. Rather, numerous pieces in the evidence box tend to support the survey data. Additionally, notes from classroom visits indicated observation of several examples of higher-order thinking skills. Teachers encourage students in many courses to research authentic tasks and to complete critical thinking activities involving analysis and synthesis of information. Student work demonstrated higher order thinking skills when teachers structure assignments for the development of the skills. Students engage in self-assessment and reflection. Teachers ask students to self-assess their level of understanding before moving forward with instruction. According

to the Endicott survey, 66.7 percent of Milford students agree that they have opportunities to assess their own work. Peer assessment and self-assessment checklists provide both for formative and summative evaluations.

Faculty views the integration of technology into the curriculum as desirable, but perceive its availability and the training needed to incorporate it as lacking. Three teachers are piloting the use of Chromebooks in their instruction as the school board considers the implementation of this technology throughout the school. Teachers currently take students to the library or computer labs for research. Some teachers use SMARTBoards for instruction and reinforcement of skills. This technology also offers access to online information including, for example, TED talks. Based on the Endicott survey, 75.9 percent of students agree that teachers ask them to use technology in their assignments. Some areas of the building lack technological infrastructure leaving them without wireless signal. Graphing calculators are available in many math classes. Photoshop, accounting software, and science lab technology are in use as well. In the ATC, there is a greater abundance of technology with uses ranging from machining to graphic art programming. Teachers go out of their way to utilize each other's knowledge and resources and to communicate current studies so as to allow others to build on the skills developed in their classrooms. Teachers lack common planning time to implement cross-disciplinary learning effectively, however. In some classrooms activities and strategies in use create a challenging and rich learning environment with many opportunities for students to succeed. As teachers continue to employ effective instructional practices and use these strategies as well as student self-assessments in all subject areas, students will be better prepared to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (teachers, self-study, student work, student shadowing, panel presentation, Endicott survey)

Teachers use formative assessment and differentiation by developing well-defined group learning activities, hands-on activities, providing additional support as needed, and by adapting their lessons based on formative assessments. Teachers' make evident use of formative assessment, especially during instructional time, and activities range from game-type activities to self-assessment checklists and quizzes, all designed to engage students' needs for re-teaching, and review. Teachers alter their instruction, including during the progress of lessons, based upon student responses in class. Parents (92 percent) responding to the Endicott survey indicate that teachers differentiate their instructional practices. All core classes are leveled, but students have choice in selecting their levels. This is seen as a form of differentiation that allows students to attend courses that are developmentally and instructionally appropriate, without limiting students' desire to be challenged. A life skills level program is offered for those who need it, pulling students into a separate environment. Additionally, the Sage School, an alternative program located off-site, is available for students requiring emotional and/or behavioral supports. Of Milford parents who responded to the Endicott survey, 89.6 percent agree that teachers provide additional support when needed. Electives are not leveled, and within many classes students have a range of choices based on their interests and abilities. Many writing prompts allow varied points of entry for students. After school help is available for all students and teachers readily offer help. The Endicott survey reports that 78.7 percent of teachers agree that they use grouping practices. Teachers purposefully organize group-learning activities through the use of jigsaw instructional strategy, grouping by student choice, and teacher assigned and random groupings. Group activities include writing, discussion, and project development. Purposeful grouping of students from varied levels helps students of all ability levels to learn effectively. Teachers provide additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom. Para-professionals assist in classes, and teachers offer after-school assistance. Additionally evident, students and staff share humor and camaraderie, with a positive school atmosphere clearly present. Students benefit from teachers utilizing a variety of instructional strategies to differentiate in order to meet the needs of all students. (classroom observations, student shadowing, panel presentation, teachers, student work, Endicott survey)

Teachers, individually and collaboratively, utilize a variety of student achievement data from both formal and informal sources as well as utilize the professional knowledge of their colleagues to improve instructional practice and to stay current on research in order to implement 21st century instruction. Many teachers report using their own time to review assessment data and then applying this to improving instruction, with 68 percent agreeing that they use data from formative and summative assessments to improve their instructional practices, according to the Endicott survey. Teachers reported soliciting parental input on occasion regarding materials used in the classroom that may be of a culturally sensitive nature, but only 22.8 percent of parents reported being asked for feedback about instructional practices. Parents may request parity assignments in areas of controversy. Administration welcomes teacher requests for time to observe other teachers. Administrators encourage professional development, with teachers reporting excellent funding for college course work. This has led to a majority of teachers having advanced degrees. Limited funding makes conference attendance more problematic, particularly for teacher-initiated activities. Staff meetings involve looking at New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) and Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) results to determine what instructional strategies were most effective and to identify areas of need. This examination of data is done at the departmental level, not general staff meetings. Other test data considered for these purposes includes scores from PSAT and SAT testing. In departmental meetings, teachers discuss consistency of instruction across teachers, what worked effectively and what did not. Within some departments, teachers examine student assignments to determine which best supports student acquisition of knowledge. Teachers meet informally to make such assessments as well. Of teachers surveyed, 53.3 percent report formal opportunities to examine student work. MHS has begun to solicit and use alumni feedback, and teachers are anxious to continue to reach out to former students to learn how their high school education has prepared them for college and careers. Teachers reported that they occasionally ask parents what works at home that might be useful in the classroom to help with student motivation and interest. Administration reported attending staff development trainings and providing feedback on implementation of new strategies discussed, as well as providing feedback as part of the evaluation process. Teachers reported attending workshops, trainings, and college courses as ways to stay current on research related to their fields of instruction. Teachers informally meet and discuss their instructional practices, but find that structured time for this is limited. When teachers have frequent formal opportunities to analyze data, examine student work, stay current on research, use feedback from a variety of sources and engage in professional conversations related to instruction, added improvements in instructional practices will occur. (teachers, self-study, teacher interviews, Instruction Standard Subcommittee, Endicott survey)

Milford High School teachers maintain a high level of professional knowledge in their content area and in instructional practices. Administration encourages all MHS staff to take college courses and to attend trainings and workshops which has led to many having advanced degrees. Students, parents, and teachers all agree in the Endicott survey that teachers' have a high level of expertise, with all three groups expressing over 85 percent agreement. The self-study indicates all teachers meet the highly qualified standard within their areas of expertise. Teachers document professional development hours in order to maintain teaching certification, and some educators are involved in ongoing professional learning communities (PLCs). As noted above, there is limited funding for workshops and conferences outside of the district. By maintaining a high level of professionalism and through ongoing training, teachers are able to offer students instruction that helps them meet the 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, Endicott survey, teachers)

Commendations:

1. The personalization of instructional strategies to meet students' needs
2. The numerous opportunities for students to be active and self-directed learners
3. The teachers' informal collaboration to review assessment data and feedback
4. The teachers commitment to maintaining expertise in their content area
5. The incorporation of higher order thinking skills into many classrooms
6. The teachers' frequent use of authentic learning tasks to engage students

Recommendations:

1. Develop and implement a process to ensure that all teachers have access to and training in the use of technology
2. Increase and clarify communication around opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning and instructional planning
3. Develop a formal collaborative process for educators to analyze data to inform instructional practice
4. Improve professional development around strategies for differentiated instructional practices

4

Assessment of and for Student Learning

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

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

11. Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning.

Conclusions

Milford High School's staff developed a formal process, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. During the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 academic years, Milford High School revised its long-standing, school-wide expectations for student learning to incorporate specific language to address 21st century learning expectations. Their syllabi and course descriptions contain core values and beliefs statements, and communicate student performance of the 21st century skills on quarterly report cards. Students have the opportunity for assessment in all skill areas of their course load throughout the year. Departments must assess student progress toward one or two of the school-wide learning expectations. Multiple assignments include the use of standard-specific and learning expectations rubrics. Subsequent to adoption of the new learning expectations, the faculty has been actively engaged in the development and implementation of rubrics, lessons plans, and assessments (both formative and summative) appropriate to the new expectations for student learning. More consistent use of these rubrics will allow teachers to monitor student progress in achieving the 21st century learning expectations. (report card samples, teacher interviews, students, syllabi examples)

The professional staff at Milford High School communicates individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students, families, and the community. The student's quarterly report card includes comments from teachers regarding a student's progression in the specific 21st century skills. Staff updates student grades frequently online via the PowerSchool grading platform. Students and parents have access to PowerSchool to monitor their performances continuously. Parents receive information and updates on their students' performances on a number of standardized tests, the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP), Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) exam. The community receives the Milford School District Report of the schools on a yearly basis. The professional staff of Milford High School reports efficiently the progress of students to the individual student, families, and the community at large. The school as a whole has progressed at an acceptable level, according to the Endicott survey, in implementing and measuring achievement of the 21st century learning expectations. The survey revealed that 42.7 percent of faculty use the school-wide rubrics when assessing student work. This percentage exceeds slightly the regional average of 39.6 percent. Departments within the Milford High School demonstrate varying degrees (from limited to acceptable) of implementation and measurement of the 21st century learning expectations, but all have made moderate progress toward use of assessments to inform student progress since the Endicott survey was taken. Continual monitoring and reporting of student progress allows teachers and administrators to respond to the needs of individual students. (report card samples, school district report, principal, students, Endicott survey)

At Milford High School the professional staff makes an effort to collect, disaggregate, and analyze data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. Among the staff, 46.7 percent agrees that data is used to report on student progress. Another 32 percent offer no opinion concerning data use. Clearly, many forms of data inform many decisions at MHS. Teachers make placement recommendations for courses based on data collected in current courses. Professional staff members create new courses to meet student deficiencies. Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) data assess areas of strength and weakness. Analysis of student performance data dictates the need for extra instructional support and interventions in areas of need. The data collected by the professional staff drive the decision-making process to address inequities in student learning. (teachers program of studies, teacher interviews, PSAT data, Endicott survey)

The professional staff communicates to students the applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals prior to each unit of study. The school's 21st century learning ex-

expectations relate to the unit-specific learning goals. Administration is moving to a Student Learning Objective (SLO) model to evaluate teachers. Teachers articulate to students the learning objectives for most assignments. Teachers include their expectations, grading policies, and 21st century learning goals in their syllabi. Through a variety of formative and summative assessments, some teachers link learning objectives to school-wide 21st century learning expectations. When all teachers communicate learning expectations at the start of each unit of study, students will have transparent awareness of assessment procedures. (teacher interviews, syllabi examples, students, school administrators)

Most teachers at Milford High School provide students with corresponding rubrics prior to summative assessments. Most assignments are given to students with rubrics for content-specific and school-wide 21st century learning expectations. Based on the Endicott survey, 76 percent of students are aware of the expectations and the goals of each assessment based on the rubric presentation. Most students (79 percent) understand the rubrics that teachers use. Most teachers use the rubrics to assess the quality of student work and provide feedback in a formal manner. Students have a better understanding of their assessment goals when teachers consistently present rubrics ahead of time. (student work, teacher interviews, students, Assessment Standard Subcommittee, Endicott survey)

Teachers at Milford High School employ a range of formative and summative assessment strategies to assess student progress in each unit. Teachers use formative assessments regularly to drive their instructional practices. In fact, 94.7 percent of teachers agree that teachers use a variety and range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments, as indicated by the 73.8 percent of students responding to the Endicott survey. Formative assessments occur daily in most classes and can be formal assignments – written class starters, daily quizzes, or exit tickets – or informal assignments such as verbal or kinesthetic acknowledgements of understanding. On a recent, informal survey of teachers showed that 42 percent of respondents use formative assessments daily and another 47 percent use formatives at least weekly. The Endicott survey showed 94.7 percent of teachers asserting that “teachers use a variety and range of assessment strategies. Effective and consistent formative and summative assessments allow teachers to gauge student performance and achievement. Through regular formative assessment strategies, teachers prepare students with the necessary skills needed to perform on the summative assessments and with the skills for life. (teacher interviews, students, classroom observations, Assessment Standard Subcommittee, student work, Endicott survey)

Milford High School facilitates formal opportunities for teachers to collaborate on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments. Endicott Survey results indicate that 62.7 percent of teachers participate in such activities. Core academic areas dedicate monthly meetings for this purpose. During the summer of 2014, English department members met to revise and standardize common formative and summative assessments. Teachers maintain constant contact informally across the curriculum to collaborate on instruction, assessment, and student achievement. Some teachers in same-section courses create and align common formative and summative assessments, to include mathematics, science, social studies, wellness and world languages. A positive school culture and climate drive collegial collaboration that allows teachers to create, analyze, and revise assessments. (teacher interviews, student work, Assessment Standard Subcommittee)

Teachers at Milford High School provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work. Teachers use formative assessment practices to monitor rough drafts of student writing prompts across multiple content areas. Teachers provide timely feedback prior to summative assessments. Teachers review results of summative assessments and provide feedback to students prior to the beginning of a new unit. Nearly three of four students (70.4 percent) report on the Endicott survey that teachers offer suggestions that help them to improve their school work. Teachers’ timely and specific feedback provides a beneficial tool for continuous progress monitoring of student

success and achievement. (students, student work, classroom observations, Assessment Standard Subcommittee, teacher interviews, Endicott survey)

At Milford High School, teachers regularly use formative assessments to adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning. Teachers allow reassessing of formative tasks to give students proper preparation for summative tasks. Teachers use formative assessment data to guide weekly lesson plans and lesson delivery for timely review of student performance. Teachers agree that formative assessments form an essential element of teaching and the assessment of learning. In an internal survey, 47 percent of teachers reported that they discuss and/or improve formative assessments as part of their departmental work. Additionally, 95 percent of teachers reported on the Endicott survey that they use a variety and range of formative assessments in their teaching. Teachers use assessments to revise daily planning and instruction. Examples include, daily quizzes, "spot checks," journal writing prompts, Google forms, clickers, bell ringers, mini-whiteboard, exit tickers and embedded review points for quick assessments of student learning. Evidence of such practices include teacher plan books, embedded review questions in presentation materials, and student work samples. Analysis of formative assessment data to guide instruction improves student learning and contributes to the school's goal of promoting equal and high quality education for all students. (teacher interviews, teacher lesson plans, student work , Assessment Standard Subcommittee)

The teachers and administrators at Milford High School, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising taught curriculum and improving instructional practice in a variety of ways. Teachers and administrators, working at administrative, departmental and individual levels, examine various forms of evidence to evaluate student learning. Students agree (81.8 percent) that teachers use a variety of methods to assess their learning. Professional staff members analyze multi-year data of student performance on the PSAT, SAT, NWEA and NECAP. The SAT performance data identifies curricular areas of strength and weakness. Administrators use an additional report, "Profile of Graduates - Ongoing," to compare trends in SAT score attainment with trends in post-secondary placement. Professional staff perform item analysis and interpretation on NECAP and NWEA scores released each year. Departments use these data to understand areas of relative strength and/or weakness for the group tested. Meeting minutes of the Milford High School curriculum team reflect implementation of new curriculum and assessments to address areas of need. Additionally, following a recommendation from the administrative team, the Milford School Board approved district funding of the 2014-2015 Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) for juniors. Advanced Placement (AP) exams were funded for 2014-15 as well. The larger data sets resulting from these district-funded tests will inform subsequent modification of curriculum. Some teachers examine common course and grade-level assessments collaboratively as teaching teams. Teachers, administrators, and student services personnel collaborate to create new courses to address student achievement inequities. Teachers and administrators collaborate effectively and openly to use assessment data to revise the curriculum and to improve instructional practices. (school leadership, teacher interviews, Assessment Standard Subcommittee, Endicott survey)

Teachers and administrators regularly review and revise grading and reporting practices to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. Departments make yearly changes, as needed, in grading practices such as quiz re-takes, and reporting practices such as common assessments. Most teachers calibrate their grading policies, practices, and weights across sections of the same courses, collaborating to ensure that they assess and evaluate students in the same manner across those courses. For example, in the summer of 2014, three members of the science department rewrote the ninth grade physical science curriculum to include more earth science and to narrow the content while increasing depth. This rewrite included the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Within the social studies, new courses have been developed to meet student requests, such as an AP U.S. history course and a standard European history course. The programming fundamentals course was rewrit-

ten for 2014-15, based on recent research articles analyzing best practices for introductory coding course. The math department developed three new courses –Topics in Applied College Math, Financial Algebra, and has plans to change the practical trigonometry course to a Running Start course by adopting a syllabus from Nashua Community College. Weight-bearing electives are reviewed annually, and the Latin Honors System was adopted recently. AP course teachers receive College Board reports of results from AP exams that show areas of relative strength and weakness of student performance. Teachers then make adjustments to course content and instructional practices. The revision and alignment of grading and reporting practices ensure that students receive equal and consistent feedback on their performance and achievement. (students, Assessment Standard Subcommittee, teacher interviews)

Commendations:

1. The inclusion of core values and beliefs in the syllabi and course descriptions to promote school-wide goals and 21st century learning expectations
2. The on-going, persistent efforts of professional staff to implement rubrics and assessments appropriate to expectations for student learning
3. The degree and consistency of monitoring of communication about student progress to respond to student needs
4. The use of data to drive decision-making to address inequities in student learning
5. The use of assessment data to make course recommendations for students
6. The calibration of grading practices and policies to ensure consistent, fair assessments across sections of the same course
7. The open, effective collaboration among administrators and faculty to assess and develop instructional practices

Recommendations:

1. Create common planning times to promote more collaboration and assessment review
2. Provide more opportunities for professional development
3. Evaluate effectiveness of assessing and reporting student achievement

**COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

SUPPPORT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

SCHOOL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

COMMUNITY REOURCES FOR LEARNING



School Culture and Leadership

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

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

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

Conclusions

The Milford High School community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all. Milford High School provides a safe and positive environment for students to learn. The doors to MHS are locked each day. Any visitor to the school must be buzzed into the building after stating their intention through a speaker. MHS requires all students and staff to wear lanyards with IDs at all times or they wear a printed sticker. The Milford School District employs a school resource officer, a veteran of the Milford Police Department. According to the Endicott survey results, 79.9 percent of the students feel safe. The majority of students reported that bullying is not an issue. Of the staff, 100 percent feels that the school culture is safe, positive, and supportive. The data from the state yearly safety survey reveals that there are few to zero incidents of vandalism, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, bullying, harassment, truancy, and physical restraint. Students report the rarity with which their peers break rules or have conflict. Meetings with stakeholders revealed pride in the school community and all assert overwhelmingly that the school culture is their strongest suit. Students and staff note that athletic events routinely attract good attendance and often the gym and football stadium are packed with supporters who cheer positively. MHS has been awarded the sportsmanship award from the New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA).

Administration review and revise student and teacher handbooks every summer. MHS publishes the student handbook in the student planner. This information includes a form for students and families to sign acknowledging that they have received this information. The school's core values and beliefs are communicated in this manner also. Interactions between students and staff are positive and respectful. Teachers actively encourage students to contact them when they miss class time, and teachers provide routine access for help before school, during school prep blocks and after school. Survey data shows that 91 percent of the parents feel that the teachers support the students in taking responsibility for their learning. Staff and administration encourage all students to take classes that challenge them and allow all to choose core and Applied Technology Center classes that work best for their needs. Interviews revealed that students feel academically safe in taking risks, asking for help and offering ideas in class. In addition to a wealth of courses to choose from, students choose from a variety of over 40 co-curricular activities and fine arts for students to join with more being added regularly. Students from all interests, abilities, and skills can find an activity to join. Also, students can join or try out for many athletic teams. The unified basketball team includes students with special needs paired with peers and faculty members. This team has played against a neighboring school and serves to create an opportunity for students to feel equality and to make new friends. The entire school attended the game and cheered enthusiastically, demonstrating another example of the positive, supportive climate of MHS. Students and staff members regularly celebrate and praise each other's work and accomplishments. In the library and around the school, large posters depict teachers reading a book. Several departments contributed to the creation of these posters. In addition, the halls are painted with student work and elaborate shadow boxes showcase student and faculty artwork in every hallway. The school store, run by students showing a sense of pride, sells merchandise displaying the MHS mascot and themes. The school is clean and well maintained daily, with graffiti and trash noticeably absent. All stakeholders in meetings used two words constantly "responsibility" and "respect" as they described the culture of the school. The lockers at MHS have no locks. Locks are available, but students may choose if they wish to use one. This positive and supportive climate results in a feeling of comfort and safety, as well as a sense of pride among the students, staff, and parents. (students, student shadowing, teachers, school leadership, Endicott survey, self-study)

Milford High School is equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achieve-

ment of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Milford offers many non-leveled academic electives, career and technical courses, and fine arts courses in which students are grouped heterogeneously. The Endicott survey reveals that 84.2 percent of students and 96.4 percent of parents feel that students have numerous opportunities to take courses in which students of varying levels of ability enroll. More than half of the teachers indicate that the school requires every student, over the course of the high school experience, to enroll in a minimum of one heterogeneously grouped core course (English/language arts, social studies, math, science, or world languages). The program of studies shows 148 courses offered in both core content and non-core areas. These courses include 69 core courses; 20 non-core courses in academic areas; 20 courses in the arts; 44 courses through the Applied Technology Center; and internships, independent study programs, Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VALCS) and Service Learning through the Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) program. The Applied Technology Center program enrolls students of all levels and all learning styles. Several of these courses offer more than one level that students can take. Students may choose the level at which they will enroll in many courses. Students are not tracked and may decide to take courses at different levels or unlevelled fine arts. Milford High School's commitment to providing an equitable and inclusive environment fosters heterogeneity and an opportunity for students to explore different content while uncovering their individual and collective strengths and learning to work together with the diverse needs of other students. (self-study, school leadership, student shadowing, district leadership, Endicott survey)

There is a formal, ongoing, program through which each student has an adult in the building, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. Milford High School began an advisory program six years ago. MHS assigns faculty advisors to students at the beginning of their freshman year and students remain with the same advisor for four years. According to the Endicott survey, 70 percent of the students and 64 percent of the parents report that the school does have an advisory program in which students meet regularly with an adult other than their guidance counselor who knows the student well. However, informal interviews with students revealed that advisory is not as impactful as it appears on paper and they meet every other week. Some concern was expressed that there are four grades in advisory. The Advisory committee scripts most meetings, meaning Advisors are given activities and topics of discussion that align with civic, social and academic themes. Some students feel they lack a connection with their advisors since pairings do not address student interests. Students remarked that they go to the principal as their second adult in the building other than their guidance counselor, if they are not close to their advisor. The system of support exists. When successfully implemented, students will more fully benefit from a one-on-one relationship with an adult other than the counselor to ensure achievement of school-wide civic and social expectations. (students, student shadowing, self-study, Endicott survey, school administrators)

Staff at Milford High School improve student learning through multiple modes of professional development including engaging on their own time in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning, using resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practice, and dedicating formal time to implement professional development, to apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment. An evidence log provided from the 2014-2015 school year demonstrates, 61.5 hours of meetings at MHS were provided during which the principal and faculty engaged in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning. However, this formal time is limited to district release time and infrequent faculty meetings. Endicott results show 67 percent of teachers stating that the school's professional development programs enable teachers to acquire and use skills to improve instruction and assessment. The administration encourages all faculty to attend outside professional development, with financial support from the district. A large number of faculty participates in outside professional development to maintain current knowledge of best practices. Milford High School teachers received reimbursements totally \$29,072 for graduate courses during the 2013-2014 school year. In the past, staff has

been encouraged to bring back the learning and share it with their peers through teacher-led academies. Common planning time is not built into the master schedule for teachers and staff, thus limiting opportunities to work together outside of school professional development days to after school, working lunch periods, and emails. While the school has professional development days and early release days, currently no formal professional development plan or clearly articulated plan for the use of time to promote the sharing of best practices exists across the school. The district has indicated that it is developing a plan that will give each school the autonomy needed to use this time to improve instruction and assessment. A district-wide, comprehensive, long-range plan for professional development will enable teachers to share best practices and improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment. (central office administrators, school leadership, self-study, teachers, Endicott survey)

School leaders use research-based evaluation and supervision processes and evidence suggests that they have begun use the process regularly resulting in more consistent application to improve student learning. Milford High School provides evidence that the Danielson model for teacher evaluation has been used for many years. Faculty describes the observation procedure as informal, but that frequent walk-through visits occur. The principal and assistant principals will often do walk-throughs and then utilize the data for an informal observation. Faculty indicate that the informal walk-through feels more authentic than planned observations. For new teachers, administrators follow the formal process more closely. The system currently in place will shift in the near future from the four-domain system adopted from Danielson to a five-domain hybrid system that includes a Student Learning Objective (SLO). By implementing the research-based evaluation process that has been developed for district-wide use, Milford High School is developing an effective process to focus on teaching practices which will impact student learning. (school administrators, self-study, School Culture and Leadership Standard Subcommittee, teacher interviews)

The organization of time supports research-based instruction and the learning needs of all students, however, professional collaboration among teachers occurs within the limits of the block schedule. Milford High School follows a four-by-four block, non-rotating schedule which allows for blocks between 85 and 90 minutes in length to promote student engagement, in-depth exploration of topics, varied instructional methods and opportunity for cross-curricular activities. This structure allows teachers a minimum of one long block per day to plan instruction, and offers limited common planning time. Evidence indicates that the administration is exploring changes in the schedule that will allow alignment of teachers' preparation periods. Currently, teachers use time before and after school to work collaboratively. Students state that the block schedule works well for them to engage fully with the curriculum. The semester model allows students to take up to ten courses a year to support student interest and achievement in learning. In addition, the block schedule is conducive to externships and internships. MHS makes sporadic use of professional learning communities (PLCs) that use protocols and peer observations as a tool to enhance instruction. Although evidence suggests that PLCs have occurred at Milford High School, more time is needed for teachers to collaborate, revise, and align curriculum to enhance student learning. The school has organized time in such a way that it meets the needs of students and has developed a plan to allow for professional collaboration among teachers. (self-survey, school administrators, teachers, students, master schedule)

Milford High School's student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. Milford High School's use of block scheduling creates an average of 54-60 students each semester per teacher. This low number allows teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students and enables teachers and students to engage in student-centered and project-based learning. Class sizes average approximately 18 students, with the largest class in 2014-2015 school year capped at 29 students in Health and Wellness I. Survey data shows that 82.5 percent of students describe class sizes in their courses as reasonable, and 81.3 percent of teachers agree that their student load and class sizes enable them to meet the needs of all learners, to personalize instruction, and to help all students

achieve 21st century learning expectations. Each day contains four blocks. The lunch block is divided into three separate class blocks known as “skinnies.” Teacher schedules vary by semester and teachers teach two or three classes per day, allowing a minimum of one full preparation period per teacher. The majority of educators teach all course levels throughout the school year. This allows students as well as teachers to engage in learning experiences through varied curriculum. The teachers’ student load and class size are conducive to building deeper relationships with students and to providing focused feedback from teacher to student. (self-study, Endicott survey, classroom observations, school leadership)

The principal of Milford High School, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership rooted in the school’s core values, beliefs, and learning expectations by creating and maintaining a shared vision and focus on student relationships. The current principal is a former teacher and has been a respected principal for the past 21 years. The school community regards him as someone who cares deeply for the school and its students, and values authentic relationships. The principal continues to keep his finger on the pulse of the school through teaching one class and directing school plays. The principal communicates his vision often, such as on the MHS 2015-2016 Leadership Goal statement. The vision says, “A warm and safe culture, quality instruction, comprehensive educational programming, and clean, updated facilities provide the most favorable conditions for effective teaching and learning.” The principal effectively communicates this vision and the school’s core values through a variety of methods, including weekly email blasts and updates to the website. Any stakeholders may call, email, or schedule a meeting with the principal to state concerns. A building-based leadership team, consisting of building administrators and a student, meets every Thursday to discuss school activities. All building administrators oversee staff and professional development, annual goal setting, recertification, and teacher evaluation. The director of curriculum oversees the department curriculum representatives and curriculum needs. The two assistant principals oversee discipline issues within the school. The director of technical studies has responsibility for curriculum, programming, and teaching and learning in career-technical education. This team works collaboratively with the principal to make decisions for the entire school. The self-study indicates that the most recent example of the principal’s instructional leadership was organizing the formation of the new school-wide learning expectations and the accompanying rubrics in 2013-2014. As a result of the his collaborative leadership style, and care and concern for students and staff, the principal has created a shared vision for Milford High School that is well known by others and will serve to help the school pursue continuous improvement in the next five years. Because the principal and his leadership team provide instructional leadership that is rooted in the school’s core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, students experience strong support in achieving their goals. (school leadership, School Culture and Leadership Standard Subcommittee, students, parents, self-study)

Opportunities for meaningful input into decision-making exist for staff members, parents, and students that promote responsibility and ownership; however, staff, parents, and students lack clearly defined roles in such decision-making. While 76 percent of teachers feel that staff, students and parents have meaningful input into the decision-making process at Milford High School, only 50 percent of students and 60 percent of parents agree. Several staff members reported that they have informal input in the decision-making process. One member of each department serves in a stipend-supported position as a curriculum leader. Curriculum leaders from the core subjects, as well as the library media specialist, meet with the academic director bi-weekly to discuss curriculum-related information. Curriculum leaders from world languages, health and wellness, and art join the committee about three to four times per year, so the whole school has representation. The academic director emails the minutes of curriculum meetings to the faculty. The principal relays information and school news to parents in his weekly email blast which can be accessed from the school’s website, and in turn allows for parent feedback to the principal. The administrative team meets every Thursday to discuss school issues and includes a stu-

dent body representative, chosen from the school-wide student council which is made up of councils representing each grade level. Through this student representative, the student population and administration communicate concerning student issues and related information. The school surveys staff on topics and concerns and uses the information to drive change. The school does not have a parent-teacher organization, a faculty senate, a school council or any other formal method to allow meaningful, defined roles in decision-making for all stakeholders. The delegation of more meaningful and defined decision-making roles to students, and parents will promote ownership in the MHS instructional program and strengthen the culture the principal has established. (Endicott survey, school leadership, School Culture and Leadership Standard Subcommittee, student, parents, self-study)

Teachers at Milford High School exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase student engagement in learning. Teachers at MHS agree that they are given autonomy to exercise initiative essential to improving the school. Several teachers participate in and advise student clubs and activities to foster engagement within the school, although most of these positions receive no stipend support. Teachers feel empowered to create new courses in both core and elective areas to enhance student interest and engagement. Teachers have worked collaboratively to create new experiences in different areas of the curriculum. Teachers have taken initiative to write grants and to promote various programs to enhance school improvement. One particular example of this leadership initiative is illustrated through the wellness committee's commitment to health and student success in the "Fuel Up to Play 60" program. In an effort to promote greater health and physical activity, three wellness committee advisors, the school nurse, a physical education teacher, and the food services manager applied for and receive an \$8,000 grant between 2012 and 2014. Grant funds purchased physical education equipment and nutrition supplies. The teachers have opportunities to exercise leadership roles in areas of professional development. For example, teachers instruct their peers in best practices and mentor new teachers. Increasing formal opportunities for leadership roles within the building will help teachers to become more active participants in improving the instructional climate and sustaining a culture conducive to teaching and learning. (self-study, teachers, school leadership, teachers, School Culture and Leadership Standard Subcommittee)

The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving Milford High School's 21st century learning expectations. The superintendent and principal hold formal bi-weekly meetings that include other central office administrators to discuss district needs and school board requests. Administrators attend school board meetings if requested by the superintendent. The school board grants sufficient autonomy to the administration to implement district policies. Informal processes of communication such as phone calls, visits, and emails occur. The principal and 75 percent of staff believes that the district administration, the building administration and the school board work collaboratively in achieving learning expectations. A process of communication and discussion exists between the principal and the school board via the superintendent to addresses areas of concern or review. Since all parties collaborate meaningfully and reflect on the school's core values and learning expectations, programs and decisions focus on the best interests of students and staff. (school board, school leadership, Endicott survey, superintendent)

The principal of Milford High School has sufficient autonomy and decision-making authority to lead the school in achieving its mission and expectations for learning. The school board fully supports the principal as the primary decision maker for MHS. The superintendent and other district leaders express confidence in the role of the principal and his ability to lead the school. According to survey data, 92 percent of the staff and 88 percent of parents believe the school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority. The principal has freedom to construct a budget that supports the school beliefs and values, presents the budget in front of the school board, and determines which classes and programs should receive funding each year. Since the school committee and superintendent grant him ample authority in decision-making, the principal provides leadership for

Milford High School that enables the school to strive toward achieving its mission and the 21st century expectations for learning. (self-study, school board, School Culture and Leadership Standard Subcommittee, department leaders, school leadership, Endicott survey)

Commendations:

1. The safe, positive, respectful, and supportive school culture
2. The commitment of the staff to seek opportunities for professional development and collaboration outside of the school day
3. The reasonable class sizes and teacher course loads that enable teachers to personalize instruction and to meet the needs of all learners
4. The equitable and inclusive environment that fosters heterogeneity and an opportunity to explore different content and learning to work with students having diverse needs
5. The depth of respect and strength of authentic relationships cultivated by the principal with staff and students
6. The degree of collaborative work among the principal and other members of the administrative team
7. The number of faculty who participate in and advise student clubs and who develop new courses to foster engagement within the school
8. The collaborative, meaningful reflection of all parties on the school's core values and learning expectations to focus programs and decisions on the best interests of students and staff

Recommendations:

1. Provide all stakeholders with a clear process to express concerns and offer input
2. Ensure a meaningful and collaborative process which includes all stakeholders for making programmatic changes that focus on the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations
3. Examine the design and implementation of the advisory program to improve its support of student achievement
4. Develop, communicate, and implement a comprehensive professional development plan that outlines opportunities for collaboration and sharing of best practices both within the school day and during designated professional development time



School Resources for Learning

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

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

7. Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
- collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations
 - provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students
 - perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Conclusions

Milford High School provides a range of timely, coordinated and directed intervention strategies for all students, including those identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Guidance counselors, the school social worker, the nurse, the English as a second language (ESOL) teacher, and special education teachers make a concerted effort to address the various needs of the student population, including at-risk and struggling students, through many programs. The Sage School, an off-campus alternative learning center, allows approximately 35 identified and non-identified students to spend all or part of the day in a smaller learning environment. Other programs identified as dropout prevention programs include summer school, credit recovery opportunities, and online courses through Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS). The Self in Society course offers identified and non-identified students an opportunity to develop social and emotional skills. Guidance personnel, the school social worker, the special education coordinator, and the nurse meet each Thursday for a 90-minute "wrap around" meeting to identify students at-risk and coordinate their efforts to identify the best intervention for identified students. Speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists provide additional services. Student service providers believe that their intervention strategies offer varied, flexible, and effective services. Evidence from the Endicott survey indicates that 51.8 percent of students, 66.7 percent of parents, and 84 percent of staff agree that the school has timely coordinated and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. (department leaders, school support staff, panel presentation, Endicott survey)

The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about student support services. All parents have access to grade updates and missing assignment lists. The principal distributes newsletters on a regular basis that inform families of news and upcoming events and sends emails to alert parents of health issues and other urgent matters. The self-study reports that families without Internet access receive notices through the mail; however, conversations with staff members indicated that physical mailings may not occur. Faculty use emails and phone calls to contact parents when necessary. The school nurse and social worker refer families to outside agencies for any service the school cannot provide. This may include health care or crisis intervention. The special education department maintains open communication with families. The school has implemented procedures to ensure ready access to important information and services to most families. (self-study, teachers, school support staff)

The support services staff of Milford High School uses technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student. PowerSchool provides real time grade reporting for parents and students. The guidance staff uses email, phone calls, the school's website, Powerschool, Career Cruising, Kuder Navigator, Method Test Prep for SAT and PSAT preparation, the Common Application to apply to colleges and universities, Collegeboard.com, and various other online resources to deliver counseling services and information to students and parents. The school nurse uses SNAP to log visits, keep student records, get student records from other schools, and keep inventory. The library media specialist offers access to computer labs and resource databases for classes and students, and documents class computer lab use with a spreadsheet. Students have access to the library's computer labs before and

after school. The special education department uses email, Easy IEP (a network drive that allows easy sharing of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in a paperless format) and a Microsoft Outlook calendar for scheduling meetings to communicate information effectively to staff, parents, and students. The special education department uses laptops for Internet access, communication devices for students with limited speech, IXL for math intervention, PowerSchool to monitor student grades, Performance Plus to monitor student test results, Lexia and Reading Plus to support reading fluency and comprehension intervention, and SMARTBoards to deliver services to students. The English as a second language teacher uses email and Microsoft Outlook calendar to communicate with and schedule his students and their teachers. As a result of regular use of a wide variety of technologies, Milford High School delivers an effective range of services to students which promotes student achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, school support staff, teacher interviews, facility tour, classroom observations)

School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who deliver a written, developmental program; meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling; engage in individual and group meetings with all students; deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers; and use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. Three full-time counselors, and a director of student services with a half case load, deliver a developmental program to approximately 850 students. Counselors conduct transition meetings with 8th grade counselors for rising 9th graders. Ninth grade families receive letters with information about guidance services. The grade nine program includes individual meetings with counselors during the first month of school, and completion of career surveys to identify interest, abilities and work preferences. The career development specialist conducts follow-up activities to allow students to conduct more individualized research. Grade 10 programming continues to survey interests, abilities and values through career development software, followed by the career development specialist conducting activities and often, use by English teachers on a formal writing assignment. Grades 11 and 12 continue career and college planning with individualized post-secondary planning. Both junior and senior planning include an open-house evenings to discuss the college admissions process and the role of the guidance counselor, and parent evenings inform families about the financial aid process and how to understand financial aid award letters. Each counselor routinely runs grade reports on his or her student caseload to identify low and failing grades for intervention. Survey results indicate that 74.8 percent of students agree that "I am comfortable going to the guidance counselor." School counseling services provide a comprehensive program of services to meet the needs of the vast majority of students as they deliver a written, developmental program; meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling; engage in individual and group meetings with all students; deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers; and use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. (central office personnel, teachers, self-study, Endicott survey)

The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who provide preventative health services and direct interventions to enable all students to

achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. A licensed registered nurse (RN) holding a bachelor of science in nursing serves students throughout the school day. An RN substitute is available if the nurse is absent from the building. There is a .75 FTE, unlicensed assistant to the nurse available every day. Health services coordinates and maintains the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) equipment. The nurse is responsible for certifying and recertifying staff in the American Heart Association Heartsaver CPR/AED course. The nurse's office provides health services that include, but are not limited to, keeping a medical history and immunizations record for each student, Individualized Health Plans (IHPs) for each student with chronic medical conditions that may require emergency action, vision and hearing screenings, administering PRN medications for students with MD orders, direct first aid to students and staff, direct care to diabetic students, referral to student services and outside agencies, flu shots, blood pressure screening, and wellness information. The nurse communicates through email and phone to parents in order to refer students to outside agencies such as a free dental clinic, the Teen to Teen Clinic in Nashua, NH, Share Food Center and Clothing Barn, Milford Welfare, and the local Lions Club. About 80 percent of the students at Milford High School feel comfortable going to the school nurse. Milford High School has adequate personnel and offers a wide range of health services. Ongoing adjustments are made based on scientific principles in keeping with state recommendations. The professional practice in the Milford High School Health Office is based on updated scientific principles, recommendations from the New Hampshire Board of Nursing, New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (including Immunization Program), and the Department of Education School Health Services. The school has no formal process to accumulate information from students and parents, in order to evaluate the quality of its health services, although the nurse plans to implement a survey of community members, and therefore cannot use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. (teacher interviews, Endicott survey, facility tour, school support staff)

Library media services have a certified library/media specialist and an adequate number of support staff to provide a full range of library services that are integrated into the curriculum. The library media specialist participates in twice monthly meetings of the curriculum committee to ensure that media services meet the needs of students and teachers. The school library media specialist spends approximately \$10,000 on library databases that support school curriculum. Classes make nearly continual use of the library computer lab of 29 computers throughout the day. An additional computer lab with 19 computers in the library receives frequent use as well. The library media specialist collects data on student/class use of the library, recording monthly usage by course type. The annual print budget is approximately \$5,500. Circulated materials include e-books, fiction, and nonfiction. The library's webpage offers 24-hour access to the library catalog and online databases. The library has several sources from which to borrow materials via Inter-library loan, requesting over 100 items per year for students and staff. The library media specialist actively pursues professional growth opportunities like the New Hampshire School Library Media Association conference and the New Hampshire Department of Education committee to plan, adopt, and comply with information and communication technology standards. The school library media specialist and the library assistant have facilitated a committee to develop a citation system for research and other papers across disciplines. This system will ensure that students have strong preparation for writing clear, well-documented papers that meet academic standards for crediting sources. Elaborate seasonal book displays and a number of professional-quality READ posters featuring MHS students, teachers, and administrators holding or reading the book of their

choice decorate the library. The makerspace is currently equipped with a 3-D printer and the materials to make bookmarks. Both the school library media specialist and the library aide offer comfortable assistance to students using these materials, available to individual students before and after school. A student book club further supports independent learners and provides opportunities to take online course work. The library opens to students and staff before and after school each day from 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Technologies to support 21st century curriculum include access to library resources via the library webpage, opportunities in the Makerspace as well as Web 2.0 collaborative projects that the library media specialist plans with English and world studies teachers. The Endicott survey supplies formal feedback to improve the library media center. The data indicates that 93 percent of students strongly agree or agree that the library opens to them before, during, and after school hours. Seventy-four percent of the staff strongly agrees or agrees that the library media specialist actively engages in the development and implementation of the school's curriculum. Ninety-four percent strongly agrees or agrees that library information services personnel provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services, that fully support the curriculum. Informal feedback from teachers has resulted in the school library media specialist creating an online library computer lab schedule for teacher access through the library webpage. The integration of library media services into the core curriculum fully supports students' achievement of 21st century learning expectations. (Endicott survey, teachers, teacher interviews, facility tour)

The support services for identified students at Milford High School, including special education, section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners (ESOL) have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations, provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students, and perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. The school serves about 850 students with about 128 students on Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), 70 students with 504 plans, and 13 students identified as English as a Second Language (ESOL), commonly known as English language learner students. The school has four special educators managing students with IEPs, a .75 FTE position managing students with 504 plans, a part-time ESOL position and 17 paraprofessionals. The support staff at Milford High School communicates frequently and effectively with faculty via email, meetings, and discussion in order to meet student needs efficiently. Identified students feel comfortable and regularly seeking and receive support from the support services staff by approaching their case managers during off blocks and during non-instructional classroom time. The ESOL teacher serves all schools across the district, but maintains frequent communication with faculty and students at the high school and maintains quality instruction and intervention for ESOL/ELL students at the school. The school offers a comprehensive life skills program for students with major developmental needs; the lead teacher is one of the four special educators. The staff feels confident in the frequency, quality, and effectiveness of their communications and services to students, faculty, and parents. The special education department monitors student standardized test scores, IEP goals, and grades. The Special Services department participates in a state-sponsored Parent Involvement Survey that occurs on a two-year cycle. In addition, the Special Services department issues a "Parent Involvement Form" to each family prior to IEP meetings to gather input regarding the service(s) that each student receives. The school's support services for identified students at Milford High School, including special education, section 504 of the ADA, and English language

learners (ELL), collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations, provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students, and perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations, collects and reviews feedback from the community in order to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. (school support staff, Endicott survey, students, self-study)

Commendations:

1. The delivery of a comprehensive guidance developmental program which includes a career development specialist places a focus on career readiness
2. The maintenance of Heartsaver First Aid CPR/AED certification by the nursing staff
3. The contributions of the health office to the safe and respectful school culture
4. The school's inviting library media space that supports the school's curriculum and learners
5. The frequency, quality and effectiveness of communications and services provided by the support services staff to students, staff and parents

Recommendations:

1. Explore student feedback from the Endicott survey to improve communication about services available to students
2. Conduct periodic surveys to collect community feedback on health services
3. Continue to update technology infrastructure and hardware
4. Explore and analyze strategies to improve the connections and supports among the technology services, the curriculum and instructional practices



Community Resources for Learning

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

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

Conclusions

The community and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for a wide range of school programs and services; sufficient professional and support staff; ongoing professional development; sufficient equipment; and sufficient instructional materials and supplies. Dependable funding for curriculum revision and a full range of technology support are lacking, however. Milford High School provides many programs and services for students, including art, business education, English/language arts, world languages, health, family and consumer science, technical education, mathematics, music, physical education, science, social studies, special education, vocational education, co-curricular activities, summer school, guidance services, health services, library and media programs, and transportation. While most programs and services have received dependable funding for these programs and services, some faculty hold the perception that requests to fund additional clubs or activities are not likely to receive financial support.

Overall, the governing body of Milford High School provides dependable funding for sufficient professional and support staff, with some additional need for expanded staff in the area of facility operations and maintenance. Student enrollment and staffing have been fairly stable for the last three years, with 2014-15 seeing a slight increase in staff and a slight decrease in enrollment since 2012-13. Class sizes are reasonable, with the largest academic class size at 26 students. While professional and support staff levels are sufficient for the instructional program, some concern exists that staffing is insufficient to support facility operations and maintenance. Nineteen custodians serve the district; four maintenance staff members and one director of operations. At Milford High School, one custodian works during the school day, with five on duty during second shift. The maintenance workers rotate on an as-needed basis throughout the district, working on long-term projects around responding to areas of immediate need. The current level of staffing has caused significant overtime costs. Because there is some additional need for expanded staff in the area of facility operations and maintenance, regular maintenance suffers while immediate needs demand attention.

The governing body of Milford High School provides dependable and more than adequate funding for ongoing professional development, but the dependability of the funding for curriculum revision is less certain. Professional development opportunities are available to all professional and support staff, with substantial financial reimbursement available to teachers for college courses and workshops. Teachers can take up to sixteen credits per year at 75 percent of the University of New Hampshire graduate credit rate, and an unlimited number of teachers may take course work in any given school year. In the 2014-15 school year, district-wide reimbursements to teachers totaled approximately \$120,000. In addition, teachers can attend elective workshops or conferences and receive reimbursements for related costs up to \$100 per school year, with a potential of \$200 extra if funding remains. Other support staff receive professional development opportunities pertinent to their particular job assignments. The district has developed and implemented a curriculum review cycle to ensure funding support for curricular changes. Minutes from the Milford High School curriculum team also show a structure in place for curriculum revision. However, the cycle has not been implemented in some instances recently and some departments have not received their prescribed funding.

A consistent theme associated with technology exists at Milford High School, as demonstrated by the fact that only 48 percent of staff believe that the community and district provide adequate funding for a wide range of technology support. The primary concern with technology involves access to internet resources via the wireless network. The district technology plan expired in 2014, and there was a request for proposal issued in 2014 to contract with a provider to install a wireless network in Milford High School. Staff, students and parents report that wireless access in the building depends on location, with staff further questioning if it is a question of wireless availability (if the installation is complete) or permissions for access. The IT department asserts that a district-wide wireless network was installed over the summer of 2014 with final completion accepted at the end of October, 2014. Wireless access has been made available to all staff members. Student access is based upon classroom/curricular requirements. Staff also express concerns that adaptive or accessible hardware is difficult to procure and that not all classrooms have current technologies such as interactive white-boards and projectors, or that those so equipped have equipment that has fallen into disrepair. Most recent IT documents show that nearly 100 percent of classrooms have overhead projectors or access to overhead-projector carts. All classrooms have been equipped with USB document cameras. In some areas, teachers use VHS players and televisions due to the inability to access video streaming sites via the internet or through personal preference. All regular classrooms have at least one computer and all teachers have access to numerous streaming video options. However, there are restrictions based on content and specific provider licensing. Students have limited access to technology during the school day for technology enhanced assignments, with many students completing such tasks outside of school using their own hardware and software. The school board has expressed its desire to provide the financial support necessary in an informed, strategic way. The governing body of Milford High School provides funding for a full range of technology support, but that support is either not dependable or inconsistent with existing needs.

Overall, the governing body of Milford High School provides dependable funding for equipment necessary to operate the facilities and provide educational opportunities for learning. Voters generally support the district budget well, with the proposed budget passing in the majority of the past five years. Though the overall budget for operations and maintenance has decreased from 2012-13 to 2014-15, the equipment necessary to operate the school facility has been provided, and in general the school has had the ability to acquire equipment necessary to provide educational opportunities for students. Equipment and technology is sufficient to meet day-to-day requirements for student work. Although the budgets are generally well supported, incomplete or insufficient implementation of plans inhibits students' access to educational opportunities.

A detailed, well-conceived curriculum review cycle has been developed to ensure all content areas receive periodic, regular review and funding for revisions and updates. However, the cycle has not been followed consistently, with some content areas being skipped and not receiving necessary funding. Larger items, such as books, have been provided as needed. Teachers do purchase items for their classrooms, from general supplies to more programmatic items. While many items are available in supply closets or through ordering, some teachers appear to lack full awareness of the materials or processes available to procure these goods. In general, the governing body of Milford High School provides funding for instructional materials and supplies, but questions exist about the consistent dependability of that support. Incomplete implementation of the curriculum review cycle inhibits student access to educational opportunities. As a result of the dependable funding in most areas of the school, the communi-

ty is providing the personnel, resources and facilities to support the delivery of curriculum, programs and services. (self-study, student shadowing, teachers, facility tour, central office personnel, Endicott survey, school board, administrators)

The school develops, plans, and funds programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant; properly maintain, catalogue and replace equipment; and to keep the school clean on a daily basis. A facilities maintenance plan includes a suggested staffing level for custodial and maintenance positions. However, current staffing levels have caused payment of a significant amount of overtime. The Milford School District employs its own custodial (nineteen) and maintenance staff (four) and one director. These staff members share responsibility for the buildings, grounds (including athletic fields), and snow removal in the winter, with the custodians assigned to specific buildings and the maintenance staff servicing all buildings. The Milford School District utilizes School Dude, a work-order system that receives and allocates requests for repairs or maintenance. The facilities maintenance plan also details a clear mission statement that supports students and student learning, and includes a section focusing on preventative maintenance. Overall budget allocations for operations and maintenance services at Milford High School in 2012-13 were \$546,859 and \$507,989 in 2014-15, a slight decrease of \$38,870. The operating budget provides the only source of funding in the event of an emergency repair or replacement need, as the district does not fund any expendable trusts. Overall, the school develops, plans, and funds programs to ensure the ongoing, anticipated maintenance and repair of the building and school plant through the regular operating budget, but no reserve funds exist for emergency maintenance or repair items. Unexpected costly repairs in one area may cause funding deficiencies in other departments.

The facilities maintenance plan includes a detailed inventory of equipment, including dates that major equipment was placed in service. The inventory is reviewed or updated annually. Four maintenance staff members respond to requests for repair or maintenance submitted through SchoolDude, and attend to ongoing maintenance and upkeep of equipment. Certain aspects of the school's infrastructure are beginning to fail, requiring more time from the maintenance staff for response to repair or maintain facilities, requiring prioritizing of tasks and the necessity of overtime. Some equipment, such as the boilers, are well maintained and functional but an upgrade could increase efficiencies and decrease operating costs. The operating budget provides the only source of funding for the maintenance and replacement of equipment, unless a separate warrant bond article is proposed, as is the planned for the 2016-17 school year. Of the anticipated \$5,000,000 bond proposal, about \$850,000 will be allocated for maintenance and repairs at Milford High School. There is no expendable trust for facilities or capital improvements. Overall, the school develops, plans, and funds programs to ensure the maintenance, inventory, and replacement of equipment, but there are no reserve funds for any emergency maintenance or repair items, resulting in a gradual decline of the physical plant.

The facility maintenance plan includes a section on cleaning procedures, and Milford High School is very well maintained and clean. The school district employs nineteen custodians. One, a building supervisor, serves Milford High School during the day, and five work the second shift. Because the school develops, plans, and funds programs to keep the school clean on a daily basis, despite some concerns about staffing levels, students and staff have a clean, safe environment in which to teach and learn. (self-study, facility tour, teachers, central office personnel)

On the whole, the community funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses programs and services; enrollment changes and staffing needs; facility needs; technology; and capital improvements. Milford High School provides funding for many programs and services, some of which are guided by long range plans. A curriculum review cycle has attached funding plans. The district has budgeted for curriculum coordinators annually for each of the past three years to support this cycle, but the funding for instructional materials attached to the cycle has not been implemented consistently. The district's technology plan was in place from 2011-2014, and though the school board indicates their willingness to support technology initiatives financially, the absence of a current plan makes it unclear what funding priorities exist. The collective bargaining agreement for teachers provides for reimbursement for both professional development and coursework, and Milford High School has budgeted \$4,640 annually for each of the past three years for improvement of instruction. Special education services are budgeted annually, but no expendable trust for special education exists to meet emergency expenses. The school district has some long range plans in varying stages of development and implementation with varying levels of funding. However, one emergency could have devastating consequences to the general budget.

The district has an articulated budget process that specifies how enrollment changes impact staff needs. Total enrollment in 2012-13 was 2,677, and 2,507 in 2014-15, a decrease of 170 students. Staffing in that same time frame has increased slightly to meet the needs of students, from 48.515 FTE to 50.135 FTE. Class sizes are appropriate, with the largest class having 26 students. Special Education teachers co-teach, teach supported study hall, and perform case management duties, with some case-loads up to 30 students.

The district has a recommended capital improvements list (as opposed to a long-rang plan), and as of October 5th, 2015 the total list calls for \$18.5 million district-wide to maintain, repair and improve facilities. A plan exists to offer a bond warrant article for 2016-17 in the amount of \$5 million for items identified as high priority on the list, with approximately \$850,000 for projects at Milford High School. The Milford High School operations and maintenance budget has decreased from \$546,859 in 2012-13 to \$507,989 in 2014-15. The district's recommended capital improvements list helps the district prioritize existing needs and develop funding plans for them on a year-to-year basis; however, this structure does not translate to a sustainable, long-range plan.

The school board has committed to providing necessary technology resources, including adequate wireless access and Chromebooks, in accordance with the technology plan. The district's technology plan now extends through September, 2016. A district-wide network was installed over the summer of 2014 with final completion accepted at the end of October, 2014. A physical, classroom-by-classroom test was completed to insure adequate coverage in every area prior to accepting vendor sign-off for the project. A district-wide pilot program for implementing Chromebooks was approved October 15, 2015. Consequently, provision of technological resources to students continues to lag. (self-study, teachers, school board, facility tour, Endicott survey)

Faculty's perception of their involvement with the implementation of the budget shows discrepancies, with some teachers reporting that they feel they have input with development, but not with im-

plementation. The Endicott Survey indicates that 40 percent of staff believe they have input into the development and implementation of the school budget. The general process starts with the principal meeting with the curriculum coordinators, and then the coordinators work with teachers in individual departments to develop proposed budget items, which can include staffing recommendations. Each department prepares a spreadsheet with budget requests, including justifications, which they submit to the principal for final review and approval. A clear process to involve faculty in development and implementation of the budget is in place, but although teachers share some voice in developing the budget, many feel disenfranchised from the implementation process. In academic areas, teacher leaders control the implementation process, and department members submit requests through these leaders and thus to the principal. Discussions with the teacher leaders and administrators suggest that clearer communication of the process may aid in full implementation of the process. The superintendent has articulated budget process guidelines that define the timeline for developing the district budget and the points at which district administrators have input. The agenda for administrative team meetings includes the budget process and budget-process guidelines. Building administrators actively oversee implementation of the budgets within their buildings and may reallocate funds from line to line if a documented need exists. However, in the absence of emergency funds for facilities and special education, it is possible that the district would have to freeze budgets and reallocate funds to respond to an emergency, thus removing the building administrator from the implementation process. Building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget, unless an emergency situation arises that limits their control of that process. (self-study, teachers, central office personnel, school leadership) (self-study, teacher interview, teachers, Endicott Survey)

The school site and plant partially support the delivery of high quality school programs and services. The site and physical plant have undergone changes that include an expansion of the library, replacing windows and doors, and renovating science labs, art classrooms, lecture halls, the auditorium, and athletic fields. Efforts are in place to continue replacing windows and doors. Students who live at least 1.5 miles from the school receive adequate transportation to and from the physical plant; however, students and school visitors cannot access adequate onsite parking. This limits the community's ability to attend functions within the school and also limits student self-transportation to and from internships, externships, and other worksites. A 2014 Parking Warrant article failed with voters. Additionally, the gymnasium has the greatest capacity for seating, yet cannot adequately seat the entire student body, and supportive spectators and visitors often are turned away from events due to seating restrictions. The gymnasium and locker rooms need renovations aside from seating capacity. The ceiling leaks and sheds paint chips onto the floor, which lacks traction and poses a safety concern. Special education programs have dedicated office space, thus allowing adequate confidentiality during meetings and conversations. The nurse's office has ample space but lacks an American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant restroom, limiting handicapped accessibility. Pipes are old and leak frequently, resulting in the disruption of programs and services and potential mold damage, highlighting a potential health hazard. These infrastructure concerns limit accessibility, confidentiality, and safety, and also interfere with education and programs. While some teachers and students benefit from the completed renovations, there have been some individual and limited interruptions of programs and services, in areas that have not been expanded, renovated or repaired. However, a substantial renovation project to address inadequacies of plumbing and other infrastructure issues in the building is scheduled to begin immediately after the close of school in June 2016. When these renovations are completed, the physical plant of Milford High

School will better meet the needs and requirements of students for achieving the 21st century learning objectives. (self-study, facility tour, student shadowing, teachers, central office personnel, school support staff, Endicott survey)

The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet most applicable federal and state laws and comply with local fire, health, and safety regulations. In 2009, Milford High School posted detailed emergency response plans in all rooms within the physical plant. In 2010, the district implemented a district-wide safety program, and the high school received recognition as a cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) Safe Community with over 75 percent of staff trained in CPR and use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs). Nursing staff are certified to teach CPR, which demonstrates the sustainability of this initiative. In 2011 Milford High School completed an air quality inspection online. In 2013, a state health inspection and school fire and life safety inspection identified problems and those problems were corrected. In 2014, fire drill reports, asbestos abatement and follow up review were completed and asbestos warnings were posted within the school. During the Visiting Committee's time at Milford High School, it appeared that the cafeteria occupancy permit expired on October 31, 2014. Additionally, the food service license appeared to have expired in June, 2015. In actuality, the licenses and permits had not expired but had not been posted properly, leading to confusion concerning compliance with these legal requirements. Milford High School has instituted procedures to ensure that appropriate licenses and permits are posted in all areas since the fall visit. Science classrooms have safety certifications, placards, warnings, and safe storage. Fire exit maps are posted throughout the building, emergency plans are posted near doorways in all classrooms, and maintenance reports and log checklists are current. Fire extinguishers are up-to-date and inspected, and maps show the locations of automated external defibrillators (AEDs). Meeting all applicable federal and state laws ensures the safety of those within the building. When maintenance and records are not adequately maintained, the potential for injury and costly damage increases. The school currently complies with all applicable federal and state laws, permits and licenses, which ensures compliance with fire, health, and safety-related regulations and procedures within the building. (self-study, facility tour, teachers)

At Milford High School, professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education. Special educators and administrators welcome and consider all parent and guardian suggestions for student success. The district website hosts information for families related to the school calendar of events, school board, important documents, funding and budgets, athletics, activities, PowerSchool, professional administration and staff contacts, programs of studies, research databases and websites, committees, and the library. Administrative personnel send monthly newsletters that include co-curricular announcements and reminders as well as monthly press releases that detail special events, student achievement, and include special thanks to the community for its support with various activities, initiatives, and projects. Approximately 90 percent of parents use the email newsletters as reliable sources of school-related information and updates. Milford High School relies primarily on the Truancy Diversion Program to identify students and families who lack school engagement. After ten half-days of absences, the Diversion Panel reaches out to parents and holds an initial meeting to explain truancy concerns and to gather information that can be used to create an intervention plan to increase student success and attendance. Fifteen days after the initial meeting, a follow-up meetings and weekly checks are implemented to track student and family compliance. When necessary, the Student Resource Officer (SRO) reaches out to families and conducts home visits to gather information related to

student concerns so that interventions can be put in place to ensure student success. A majority of staff (74.7 percent) and parents (59.2 percent) agree that the school actively engages parents and families as partners in each student's education. The Endicott survey revealed that 40 percent of Milford parents and children receiving special education services believe their school facilitates parent involvement as a means for improving services, which is three percent above the state target. When parents and families have opportunities and are engaged as partners in each students' education, students are able to receive the educational support from home and school, which positively contributes to student success. Multiple opportunities to receive school-related information exist and Milford High School personnel and families make consistent use of the programs to communicate, to access information, and to support the academic progress of students. (teacher interview, self-study, Endicott survey, department leaders)

Milford High School develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning. Parents have various opportunities to contribute to student learning through volunteering at school activities and as contributing members of the Milford High School Spartans Football Boosters and Music Boosters, comprised almost entirely of parents and community members. Additionally, the Milford High School Wellness Committee requires parent involvement. The community's Rotary Club, Lions Club, and Kaley Foundation work in partnership with Milford High School to support student success. The Career and Workforce Development Committee have worked in collaboration with the Milford Rotary to create a pre-employment skills curriculum to support Milford High School students, especially those involved in the Souhegan Valley Chamber of Commerce Interview Competition. Additionally, the ATC culinary program worked in partnership with the Milford Police Department to implement a "Coffee and a Cop" program where students can interact congenially with the local police workforce. At least 85 businesses partner with Milford High School to provide authentic job-related experience and mentorship opportunities to students. Several opportunities for businesses to interact directly with Milford High School students, such as Healthcare Career Day, Computer Science Awareness Career Day, Engineering Career Day, and the Souhegan Valley Chamber of Commerce Career and Business Expo. The Regional Center Advisory Committee engages business and industry leaders to work with administrators and teachers to evaluate and improve career and technical programs within the ATC. In 2006 Milford High School employed a full-time Career Development Specialist to help students identify and secure work-related experiences. Approximately 40 students participate in job shadowing and 40 students have enrolled in internship courses at Milford High School. A Special Education Job Coach partners with local businesses to establish career pathways for Special Education students through a program called Work-Based Learning, which currently serves approximately 50 students. Milford High School also partners with New Hampshire Community College and Southern New Hampshire University to offer 26 courses in which students who pass with a grade of C or better receive dual enrollment credits. During the 2013-2014 school year, approximately 175 students enrolled in these dual credit courses. A majority of parents (74 percent) agree that the school has effective partnerships with parents, community organizations, businesses, and higher education. When an educational institution partners with parents, community, businesses, and higher education, students benefit from resources and experiences that enrich and support their success. Milford High School offers a variety of opportunities for the public to interface with and enhance the educational experience of the student body, which prepares students for success in adulthood by structuring authentic educational experiences. (self-study, teachers, panel presentation, Endicott survey)

Commendations:

1. The generous course reimbursement program which encourages educators to pursue professional development
2. The provision of high-quality custodial and maintenance services that respond to needs quickly and provide an attractive, clean facility
3. The Milford High School and Applied Technology Center which provides a wide range of quality educational opportunities for all students in appropriate class-sizes settings
4. The recent renovations and repairs which are ADA compliant, attractive, and exemplify the strong sense of school pride
5. The partnerships with parents, community, businesses, and higher education which foster community involvement that supports 21st century learning and provides multiple varied opportunities for students to engage in self-directed learning

Recommendations:

1. Update the district's technology plan to reflect the current priority items, an implementation plan, and associated funding
2. Provide adequate, universal wireless access for teachers, students and guests
3. Ensure adequate emergency funding resources exist for facilities and special education
4. Review custodial and maintenance staffing levels to ensure the district can appropriately focus on preventative maintenance and repair
5. Transform the capital improvements list into an articulated long-range plan for facilities and capital improvements, that include addressing the parking and gymnasium issues
6. Complete the summer 2016 project to address the replacement of out-of-date plumbing to resolve potential safety and health-related concerns
7. Create a system to engage all parents with their students' education for those not on the grid with electronic access to information

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

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

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Commission has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Commission within sixty (60) days of occurrence any substantive change which negatively impacts on the school's adherence to the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The report of substantive change must describe the change itself and detail any impact which the change has had on the school's ability to meet the Standards for Accreditation. The Commission's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix on page 61. All other substantive changes should be included in the Two- and Five-Year Progress Reports and/or the Annual Report which is required of each member school to ensure that the Commission office has current statistical data on the school.

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

The visiting committee expresses its appreciation for the hospitality provided by the entire staff at Milford High School as well as its thanks to the principal, superintendent, steering committee, self-study standards committees, school board, teachers, parents, and students who willingly provided us with the information and feedback necessary to write this report.

Milford High School & Applied Technology Center
 NEASC Accreditation Visit
 October 25 – October 28, 2015

Visiting Committee

<p>Edward G. Wilkins, Chair Springfield High School Springfield, VT 05156</p> <p>Diane Canada, Assistant Chair Portsmouth High School Portsmouth, NH 03801</p> <p>Amanda Blaisdell North Country Union High School Newport, VT 05855</p> <p>Shane Collins Stevens High School Claremont, NH 03743</p> <p>Ann Distasio Danvers High School Danvers, MA 01923</p> <p>Charley Faria Suffield High School West Suffield, CT 06093</p> <p>Tina Hamolsky Conant High School Jaffrey, NH 03452</p> <p>Elizabeth Koch Raymond High School Raymond, NH 03077</p>	<p>Tamara Lobo Lawrence High School Lawrence, MA 01843</p> <p>Lytania Mackey Swampscott High School Swampscott, MA 01907</p> <p>Emily Platt Littleton High School Littleton, NH 03561</p> <p>Andrew Sargent Ipswich High School Ipswich, MA 01938</p> <p>Juianne Shore Norwood Senior High School Norwood, MA 02062</p> <p>John Usher Stevens High School Claremont, NH 03743</p> <p>Robert Ward Goffstown High School Goffstown, NH 03045</p> <p>Lisa Witte Monadnock Regional High School Swanzey, NH 03446</p>
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NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

Committee on Public Secondary Schools

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

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

List of Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations

1 Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

1. The school culture and climate that promote equal opportunity and contribute to student success
2. The safe, respectful school environment that fosters responsibility and collaboration
3. The collaborative processes teacher leaders and staff followed in creating the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, which led to "consensus, not compromise"
4. The autonomy afforded the staff during the development of the core values, beliefs, and 21st learning expectations

2 Curriculum

1. The math department's implementation and consistent review of curriculum guides by all teachers within their department
2. The cross-curricular alignment between English and internship classes
3. The improved coordination of curricular planning and development through the creation of a district director of curriculum and instruction position

3 Instruction

1. The personalization of instructional strategies to meet students' needs
2. The numerous opportunities for students to be active and self-directed learners
3. The teachers' informal collaboration to review assessment data and feedback
4. The teachers' commitment to maintaining expertise in their content area
5. The incorporation of higher order thinking skills into many classrooms
6. The teachers' frequent use of authentic learning tasks to engage students

4 Assessment of and for Student Learning

1. The inclusion of core values and beliefs in the syllabi and course descriptions to promote school-wide goals and 21st century learning expectations

2. The on-going, persistent efforts of professional staff to implement rubrics and assessments appropriate to expectation for student learning
3. The degree and consistency of monitoring of communication about student progress to respond to student needs
4. The use of data to drive decision-making to address inequities in student learning
5. The use of assessment data to make course recommendations for students
6. The calibration of grading practices and policies to ensure consistent, fair assessments across sections of the same course
7. The open, effective collaboration among administrators and faculty to assess and develop instructional practices

5

School Culture and Leadership

1. The safe, positive, respectful, and supportive school culture
2. The commitment of the staff to seek opportunities for professional development and collaboration outside of the school day
3. The reasonable class sizes and teacher course loads that enable teachers to personalize instruction and to meet the needs of all learners
4. The equitable and inclusive environment that fosters heterogeneity and an opportunity to explore different content and learning to work with students having diverse needs
5. The depth of respect and strength of authentic relationships cultivated by the principal with staff and students
6. The degree of collaborative work among the principal and other members of the administrative team
7. The number of faculty who participate in and advise student clubs and who develop new courses to foster engagement within the school
8. The collaborative, meaningful reflection of all parties on the school's core values and learning expectations to focus programs and decisions on the best interests of students and staff

6

School Resources for Learning

1. The delivery of a comprehensive guidance developmental program which includes a career development specialist places a focus on career readiness
2. The maintenance of Heartsaver First Aid CPR/AED certification by the nursing staff
3. The contributions of the health office to the safe and respectful school culture

4. The school's inviting library media space that supports the school's curriculum and learners
5. The frequency, quality and effectiveness of communications and services provided by the support services staff to students, staff and parents



Community Resources for Learning

1. The generous course reimbursement program which encourages educators to pursue professional development
2. The provision of high-quality custodial and maintenance services that respond to needs quickly and provide an attractive, clean facility
3. The Milford High School and Applied Technology Center which provides a wide range of quality educational opportunities for all students in appropriate class-sizes settings
4. The recent renovations and repairs which are ADA compliant, attractive, and exemplify the strong sense of school pride
5. The partnerships with parents, community, businesses, and higher education which foster community involvement that supports 21st century learning and provides multiple varied opportunities for students to engage in self-directed learning

Recommendations



Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

1. Provide opportunities for students and parents to participate in the review and revision of the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations
2. Engage school board and community members actively in discussions involving the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations
3. Fully integrate the use of the analytic rubrics that define the levels of student achievement toward the 21st century learning expectations in all classes
4. Formalize processes for reporting, reviewing, and disaggregating student achievement data on the 21st century learning expectations to ensure that the Core Values and student data drive curriculum, instruction, assessment and inform school practices, policies and allotment of resources
5. Use the core values and data on student achievement of the 21st century learning expectations to drive curriculum, instruction, assessment, and to inform school policies, practices, and the allotment of resources

2**Curriculum**

1. Improve the clarity of labeling and coordination of documents to show embedded 21st century learning expectations in all courses, skills, and assessments
2. Develop and implement a common format for written curriculum
3. Establish a process for data collection leading to review and revision of curriculum guides
4. Provide regular training in instructional technology to all staff members
5. Develop a plan to improve awareness of professional development and planning time available to all staff
6. Implement the curriculum review cycle as designed

3**Instruction**

1. Develop and implement a process to ensure that all teachers have access to and training in the use of technology
2. Increase and clarify communication around opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning and instructional planning
3. Develop a formal collaborative process for educators to analyze data to inform instructional practice
4. Improve professional development around strategies for differentiated instructional practices

4**Assessment of and for Student Learning**

1. Create common planning times to promote more collaboration and assessment review
2. Provide more opportunities for professional development
3. Evaluate effectiveness of assessing and reporting student achievement

5**School Culture and Leadership**

1. Provide all stakeholders with a clear process to express concerns and offer input
2. Ensure a meaningful and collaborative process which includes all stakeholders for making programmatic changes that focus on the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations

3. Examine the design and implementation of the advisory program to improve its support of student achievement
4. Develop, communicate, and implement a comprehensive professional development plan that outlines opportunities for collaboration and sharing of best practices both within the school day and during designated professional development time



School Resources for Learning

1. Explore student feedback from the Endicott survey to improve communication about services available to students
2. Conduct periodic surveys to collect community feedback on health services
3. Continue to update technology infrastructure and hardware
4. Explore and analyze strategies to improve the connections and supports among the technology services, the curriculum and instructional practices



Community Resources for Learning

1. Update the district's technology plan to reflect the current priority items, an implementation plan, and associated funding
2. Provide adequate, universal wireless access for teachers, students and guests
3. Ensure adequate emergency funding resources exist for facilities and special education
4. Review custodial and maintenance staffing levels to ensure the district can appropriately focus on preventative maintenance and repair
5. Transform the capital improvements list into an articulated long-range plan for facilities and capital improvements, that include addressing the parking and gymnasium issues
6. Complete the summer 2016 project to address the replacement of out-of-date plumbing to resolve potential safety and health-related concerns
7. Create a system to engage all parents with their students' education for those not on the grid with electronic access to information

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