

New England Association of Schools and Colleges



Commission on Public Secondary Schools

Report of the Visiting Committee for Stratford High School

Stratford, CT

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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 Stratford High School 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 days (60) of its completion to the superintendent, school board, public library or town office, and the appropriate news media.

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

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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 six Commissions: the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE), the Commission on Independent Schools (CIS), the Commission on Public Secondary Schools (CPSS), the Commission on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI), 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 Commission. Those Standards are:

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

- Support 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 Commission'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 Commission in the Follow-Up process. Continued accreditation requires that the school be reevaluated at least once every ten years and that it show continued progress addressing identified needs.

Preparation for the Evaluation 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 Stratford High School, a committee of nine members, including 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. In addition to faculty members, the self-study committees included students and parents.

The self-study of Stratford High School extended over a period of 21 school months from January 2011 to January 2013. The visiting committee was pleased to note that students and parents joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

Public schools evaluated by the Commission 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 Commission, Stratford 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 sixteen evaluators was assigned by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Stratford High School. The Committee members spent four days in Stratford, Connecticut, 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 Commission's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented public schools, a central office administrator, and an institution of higher education diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Stratford High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 40 hours shadowing 16 students for a half day
- a total of 21 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 30 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 on the report was agreed to by visiting committee consensus. Sources of evidence for each conclusion drawn by the visiting committee appear in parenthesis 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 be helpful to the school as it works to improve teaching and learning and to better meet Commission Standards.

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

School and Community Summary

Located on Long Island Sound at the mouth of the Housatonic River, Stratford is the easternmost town in Fairfield County. It sits between Interstate Route 95 and the Merritt Parkway just 60 miles from New York City.

In 2010, Stratford's population was 48,817, comprised of 83.3% White, 9.9% Black, 9.1% Hispanic/Latino, 4.5% other/multi-race, and 2.3% Asian Pacific. The majority of the population is employed in services, trade, and manufacturing, with a median family income of \$66,162. Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation, one of the leading helicopter manufacturers in the United States, is a major source of employment for Stratford residents. In 2009, the unemployment rate was 8.9%, and 4.7% of the community was at or below the poverty rate. During the 2011-2012 school year, 36.2% of Stratford High School's population qualified for free or reduced priced lunch.

Stratford High School includes students in grades 9-12 with a total enrollment of 1,067. Student population is made up of 534 males and 533 females with the following breakdown: 0.2% American Indian, 2.7% Asian Pacific, 27.9% black, 45.0% white, and 24.2% Hispanic/Latino. Students receiving special education services make up 7.4% of the population and 3.2% of students are enrolled in the English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) program.

Along with Stratford High School, the district has one other public high school, Bunnell High School (with a student population of 1,140). Stratford High School's enrollment has increased during the last five years due to a changed pathway plan of the feeder elementary and middle schools. This was part of an initiative to redistribute and balance the enrollment between Stratford and Bunnell High Schools. The enrollment for both high schools is currently stable. There are two public middle schools, Flood Middle School (602 students) and Wooster Middle School (542 students); Wooster serves as Stratford High School's primary feeder school. There are nine public elementary schools: Chapel Street Elementary School (558 students), Franklin Elementary School (295 students), Lordship Elementary School (223 students), Nichols Elementary School (433 students), Second Hill Lane Elementary School (715 students), Stratford Academy Honeyspot House and Stratford Academy Johnson House (702 students), and Eli Whitney Elementary School (540 students). There are also two private K-8 schools in Stratford: St. Mark's School and St. James School.

There are 70.4 full-time equivalent teachers at Stratford High School, creating a student to teacher ratio of 15.2:1. Core academic teachers carried an average load of 111 students per teacher and an average class size of 22.2 students during the 2011-2012 school year. Students attend school for 182 school days. The average dropout rate for the last two years has been 5.65%. The average daily attendance rate for the 2010-2011 year among students was 93.5% and 88.9% among teachers. Support services to enhance classroom achievement continue to be provided in the subject areas of English and mathematics.

The Stratford School district is in district reference group (DRG) G, which is in the bottom 20% of the State of Connecticut's DRGs. Stratford's per-pupil expenditure for the 2011-2012 school year was \$12,832, compared to a Connecticut state average of \$13,584. In fiscal

year 2011, state and other resources accounted for 23.96% of all funds received in the district, leaving 76.04% of funding to be obtained through local taxes. Of the local budget, 49.5% is allocated to the public schools.

Grade 9 English and Grade 10 civics courses are currently non-leveled. Students are placed in honors, level 1, or level 2 for the remainder of core academic classes. Students also have many Advanced Placement (AP) or University of Connecticut Early College Experience (ECE) courses or both to choose from, including biology, Calculus AB, Calculus BC, chemistry, French, music theory, physics, Spanish, statistics, studio art, and US History. There are also four different career pathways at Stratford High School. Students can choose from health and medical, pre-engineering, culinary, and pre-teaching and social services. Classes for pre-teaching and social services are located at Bunnell High School, but transportation is provided for students. These programs allow students to earn college credit in the given subject areas through Gateway Community College, the University of New Haven, and the University of Connecticut if they meet the program requirements. There are also opportunities for students to participate in regional center for the arts (RCA) and aquaculture, two programs that allow students to take their core academic classes at Stratford High School while taking elective classes at an alternate location. Stratford High School provides students with the opportunity to participate in Yale Model United Nations, the Global Education Project, and International Relations Foreign Policy simulation provided by University of Connecticut and the University of Maryland. Students may also enroll in an honors business and finance course. In addition to that, Stratford High School currently hosts a financial branch of the Sikorsky Credit Union on site. This financial institution serves as an operational learning laboratory for students interested in pursuing careers in the business and finance industry. The expectation is that this facility will positively affect the fiscal culture of the school and support financial literacy education throughout the building.

Honors class enrollment (in one or more classes) includes 44% of the student population, and 14% are enrolled in at least one AP class. All students are required to take 4 English credits, 3 mathematics credits, 3 social studies credits, 2 science credits, 2.1 credits of physical education (offered 2 or 3 times a week) and health (taken during Grade 9 and Grade 12, offered two or three times per week), 1 credit of an art or vocational class, and 5.9 elective credits (i.e., art, business education, family and consumer science, technology education, computers, theater arts and vocal production, journalism, and music). Stratford High School offers a variety of co-curricular activities including but not limited to jazz band, concert band, concert choir, athletics, drama, student council, class council, and numerous clubs.

In the Class of 2011, 42% of graduates attended four-year colleges, 44% attended two-year colleges, 7% entered into a trade school, 4% entered into the workforce, and 3% entered into the military. Graduates take advantage of many of the local community colleges such as Housatonic Community College and Norwalk Community College, as well as many of the state schools. There are also opportunities for adult continuing education held in the evenings throughout the town as well as through Stratford Recreation. Stratford High School has many business and community partnerships, including Stop & Shop, Walmart, Sikorsky, and Sodexo. There are numerous opportunities for students to explore their future career possibilities. Some of these opportunities include the annual career connections and annual community connections fairs. Students can also take part in the following: Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA),

Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA), ACE Mentoring (students interested in Architecture, Construction Management or Engineering), Student-to-Student Mentoring, E-mentoring, career shadowing, and internships. The principal's advisory committee links parents, students, and the administration together to assess all aspects of the school community in an effort to improve climate and services.

Students at Stratford High School are recognized for their academic accomplishments through student of the month awards, the underclassman awards ceremony, senior awards night (awarding scholarships totaling approximately \$100,000), first and second honor roll, and inductions to honors societies including National, French, Spanish, and Science. Students are also recognized for athletic accomplishments during each season's sports awards night. Students and staff are recognized for many different accomplishments during morning announcements, in the daily bulletin, and on the bulletin boards outside the main office.

The Stratford School Department initiated a strategic planning process to "create a community plan for education that was based on the voices of the community." To facilitate and develop a guiding framework for the initiative, a strategic planning steering committee was formed by the town to review needs and desired outcomes using the educational mission statements and expectations developed by the town and high schools. Part of the guiding framework was to conduct a physical assessment of Stratford High School vis-à-vis existing and future programmatic needs for the 21st century.

Built in the 1920s with subsequent additions, Stratford High School was determined to have a number of deficiencies and issues compromising the district's mission of meeting student needs for the 21st century. In its educational specifications report, recommendations were made for an overhaul of the school, including all aspects of the physical plant, such as building systems, lighting, finishes, traffic configurations, accessibility, technology, and security. Recommendations for instructional and support spaces were also specified. In response, the town council has approved a bonding of \$53 million for the construction project. A projection of 49% will be reimbursed by the state of Connecticut pending approval. The plan for refurbishing the building is to commence in the summer of 2013, with a completion time of three years.

Stratford High School

Statement Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations

Core Values

Students will acquire content knowledge, strengthen higher-order thinking, and develop character in order to address 21st century challenges.

Core Beliefs for Learning

- A safe, positive school climate that embraces diversity is essential to ensure respect and opportunity for each individual.
- Students should understand the world beyond their community in order to contribute to a global society.
- Parents and students must share responsibility and work in partnership with the school in order to improve academic performance and to develop lifelong learners.
- Students should use technology effectively to acquire, process, and deliver information.

The Stratford High School community has identified the following learning expectations for all students:

Academic Competencies – Students will be able to:

- use real-world digital and other research tools to access, evaluate, and effectively apply information appropriate for authentic tasks
- communicate information clearly and effectively using a variety of tools/media in varied contexts for a variety of purposes
- demonstrate innovation, flexibility, and adaptability in thinking patterns, work habits, and working/learning conditions
- effectively apply the analysis, synthesis, and evaluative processes that enable productive problem solving
- show competence in all core academic subjects and other fields of interest, including the ability to effectively communicate content information in multiple formats

Civic and Social Competencies – Students will be able to:

- work independently and collaboratively to solve problems and accomplish goals

- value and demonstrate personal responsibility, character, cultural understanding, and ethical behavior

Stratford High School 21st Century Learning Expectations – The 7 Cs

Collection of Information

- Access information
- Organize information
- Evaluate sources
- Use information
- Align solution with task
- Cite all sources

Collaboration

- Show independent initiative
- Assume shared responsibility
- Assist others in their roles
- Contribute ideas
- Keep an open mind
- Apply strategies
- Take a variety of roles
- Tolerate different viewpoints

Communication

- Listen actively
- Express ideas
- Use a variety of techniques
- Select appropriate media
- Use multiple forms of media

Creativity

- Know personal creative process
- Generate ideas
- Maximize creative efforts
- Demonstrate originality
- Learn from mistakes

Critical Thinking

- Ask clarifying questions
- Analyze complex systems
- Evaluate evidence
- Justify arguments
- Draw conclusions
- Reflect on learning

- Transfer problem-solving skills

Character

- Show consideration
- Respect everyone
- Show concern for others
- Embrace diversity
- Maintain positive values

College and Career

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES, INC.
COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS
STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

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

The school community has engaged 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. Stratford High School has utilized many different resources informed by current research-based best practices to develop its core values and beliefs about learning. The administration first organized a committee made up of teachers and administrators within the high school to re-evaluate their core values and beliefs that were first established nearly a decade ago. With input from different forums including a superintendent-student advisory committee, faculty meetings, student advisory committee, principal advisory committee, and professional development, the committee was able to collaboratively create a core values statement to support its school's mission statement and learning expectations. The identified core values and beliefs about learning promote a unified belief that will prepare Stratford High School students for future success. Stratford High School has developed a core values and mission statement that governs a unified belief shared by the entire school community. Once this statement was created, and the majority of the learning community was familiar with it, they began to examine three models of philosophies of 21st century learning expectations, and later adopted Mr. Jonathan P. Costa's model for the 21st century learning expectations. Using Mr. Costa's model, the school personnel developed and implemented the following learning expectations for all students: communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, collection of information, character, and college and career (7 Cs). Many of these expectations had been required at Stratford High School prior to the development of the new 21st century learning expectations. The administration has yet to develop a plan for a more formal and regular review of the core values and beliefs about learning. Therefore, when the administrators, faculty, and staff members continue to utilize a focused and formal process for articulating the core values, then students, teachers, and parents will be able to reference the core values and learning expectations, and will more effectively comprehend the connections between the daily school activities and the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, panel discussion, teachers)

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. After receiving school board approval of the new Stratford High School Core Values and Learning Expectations document, a committee was established to research various school-wide rubrics that meet 21st century learning needs. The learning expectations set school-wide standards for academic, social, and civic competencies by which all students are measured for proficiencies. They also provided indicators for those who fall below the standards for proficiency as well as for those who exceed the standard. As a result, there is pervasive evidence that all students are being challenged to demonstrate 21st century learning expectations and that this performance is measured regularly. These expectations address academic competencies such as collection of information, collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking as well as social and civic competencies such as character. All curricular documents are designed around the 21st century learning expectations to ensure that students are college and career ready when leaving Stratford High School. Work is underway to monitor students on high levels of achievement through performance-based assessments (PBAs), common formative assessments (CFAs), and school-wide analytic rubrics. The 21st century report cards, which measure students' achievement, have

also been developed and implemented in the school. When the school begins to measure their 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies, and are defined by school-wide analytic rubrics, students will be able to attain the targeted high levels of achievement. (self-study, panel discussion, parents, teachers)

The school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are consciously reflected in the culture of the school, are connected to curriculum, instruction, and assessment in many classrooms, and are present in the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations. The core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are reflected in the culture of the school, are driving curriculum revision and assessment in every classroom, and are guiding the development and revision of the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations. In all hallways and classrooms, the 21st century learning expectations are prominently displayed in a consistent and clear format. The school developed a logo, which summarizes the 7 Cs concisely, and assists in making the expectations accessible to all students and staff. Many samples of student work indicate that students are challenged across curricula to demonstrate proficiency in these areas, and teachers readily use the language of these expectations with students, colleagues, and parents. Rubrics which accompanied many samples of classroom assessments represented a wide range of interpretations of these 21st century learning expectations. The policies and procedures in several documents, such as the student handbook, the program of studies, the advisory curriculum, and various department curriculum documents, are closely aligned with most expectations, such as critical thinking, collaboration, collections of information, and communication. The Stratford High School Climate Plan documents a clear process for reinforcing the expectation of character, though the policy regarding bullying and sexual harassment requires greater reinforcement. Finally, the district's three-year technology plan has established a goal by 2015 to increase blended learning experiences and to consider opportunities for students to use portable learning devices in the learning process. This allocation of resources directly supports all seven of Stratford High School's 21st century learning expectations. Hence, because the administration and faculty continually reflect upon and implement the use of the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations to drive the school's curriculum, instruction and assessment, and use them to guide policies, procedures, decisions and resource allocations, the expectations are truly reflected in the culture of the school. (self-study, observation, school administrators, teachers, students)

The school has recently reviewed and revised its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, as well as on district and school community priorities. The school has established a plan and supporting processes for reviewing and revising its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, and in concert with district and community priorities, but the plan has yet to be put in operation. Stratford High School has developed a timeline and identified processes to guide future reviews and revisions. Using the work from the 2008 civic, academic, and social expectations committee, a faculty team reviewed various mission statements from other schools and submitted a recommended revision to the administration, with the suggestion that more input be received from community, student and alumni stakeholders. Through a series of faculty and in-service meetings, the faculty accepted the final mission statement, beliefs and expectations, and a copy was distributed to staff in August 2011. Administration contracted an education consultant to assist staff in developing observable and measureable 21st century learning expectations. The

culmination of these expectations (that graduates are college and career ready) aligns closely with district and community priorities. In departments, staff regularly review results from common formative assessments; however, other forms of data, such as PSAT, SAT, ACT and AP scores are not used to identify domains within curriculum areas which are aligned with 21st century learning expectations that may require attention. Data from authentic career experiences (i.e., Project Lead the Way, job shadowing, College-Career Pathways, advisory surveys, etc.) are not used to inform student performance in relation to the 21st century learning expectations. Therefore, since the administration and faculty review and modify the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research and multiple data sources, they will continue to drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom and will continue to guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions and resource allocations. (self-study, school board, parents, school administrators, teachers)

Commendations

1. The collaborative and inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices used by the school to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning
2. The 21st century learning expectations which challenge all students regarding academic, social and civic competencies
3. The consistent and prominent display of school-wide 21st learning expectations throughout the building
4. The prevalence of school-wide 21st learning expectations in school policies and procedures
5. The recent review and revision of the mission, core values and beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations
6. The use of current, professional research to inform the development of the 21st century learning expectations
7. The alignment of the mission, core values and beliefs and 21st century learning expectations to district and community priorities

Recommendations

1. Engage in regular, more dynamic planned review and revision of the core values and beliefs in learning
2. Develop and implement standardized school-wide rubrics in order to improve the inconsistencies with the 21st century report cards
3. Develop and implement a plan to consistently reinforce the expectation of character for all students

4. Utilize a variety of assessment data to monitor student performance regarding 21st century learning expectations

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-curricular programs, and other learning opportunities. The curriculum reflects the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The curriculum is collaboratively developed, implemented, reviewed, and revised based on analysis of student performance and current research.

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

Conclusions

The curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Stratford High School's 7 Cs learning expectations are utilized as a guide for lesson planning and instruction. All stakeholders are aware of the 7 Cs skills, although there is a need for all teachers to fully comprehend the meaning and intent of each and the application of the school-wide learning expectations, core values, and beliefs. The 7 Cs are visible and evidently used in every classroom setting. The 7 Cs skills are assessed using the school-wide rubrics and reported to parents and caregivers via the implementation of the 21st century report card in addition to the traditional report card. These report cards are sent home to parents to show student progress in achieving these 21st century learning expectations. Performance-based assessments (PBAs) and the 7 Cs are aligned with and imbedded in the curriculum across all disciplines and departments. There has been an ongoing implementation of a five-year curriculum development cycle for the continued revision, adaptation, and integration of the school's learning expectations that coincide with the school's core values and beliefs. Hence, since the curriculum has been purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations, all students are able to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that the school has established for all students. (self-study, observation, parents, teachers, students)

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; and assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics. The existing curriculum documents use a common format to illustrate the essential questions, concepts, content, and skills in the units of study within the main courses based on the *Understanding by Design* (UBD) model. The curriculum design is driven by the 21st century learning expectations and identified within the lesson plan format across disciplines. There is adequate teacher input in the creation, revision, and improvement of the curriculum. There is evident use of essential questions as they are posted in the vast majority of classrooms, as well as within the lesson plans. Formative and summative assessments are present within lesson plans and are correlated with the 7 Cs. These assessments, as well as PBAs, are used school wide. There is a schedule for the use of common formative assessment (CFA) with course-specific rubrics to check for student achievement and understanding. The data used from these assessments drives the evaluation and recommendations for curriculum improvement and future instruction. Teachers use extensive analytic and course-specific rubrics to analyze student performance and achievement. However, there is often inconsistent usage of the school-wide 21st century learning rubric within and among the different disciplines. Since curriculum for all disciplines 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; and significant tasks/assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics, teachers, students, and parents more thoroughly understand what is expected in all curricular areas. (self-study, observation, teachers, students)

The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem-solving, higher-order thinking, cross-disciplinary learning, and authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school as well as informed and ethical use of technology. The Stratford High School curriculum has been revised to emphasize depth of

understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry, problem-solving, higher-order thinking, authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school, and stresses informed and ethical use of technology. The collaboratively developed 7 Cs language and icons embody the requisite skills mandated by the Stafford High School's 21st century learning expectations and are the focus of curriculum. This ongoing focus on 21st century skills, as evidenced by their inclusion in all curriculum documents, helps to ensure that students have many opportunities to apply knowledge in an authentic way. Furthermore, PBAs are embedded in courses across the disciplines and are assigned quarterly. These PBAs are graded not only according to content, but are aligned to the school-wide learning expectations and core values. Differentiation of curriculum is evident in the presence of both heterogeneously and homogeneously grouped courses. Within the heterogeneously grouped civics course offering, there is an optional honors component in order to further challenge students. Homogeneously grouped courses are offered at level 1, level 2, honors, and AP. The school plans on increasing student participation in AP courses and College Board AP testing. Special education teachers are embedded in collaborative courses for co-teaching of special education students. Teachers expressed concern that special education staff members are sometimes placed out of their areas of content expertise and this can make the co-teaching model more difficult to implement adopted curriculum. Math tutoring is available for students to receive additional support beyond their regular math class and to help prepare for Scholastic Achievement Tests (SAT) and Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) tests. English tutoring is available to help with literacy skills and performance on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT). The College-Career Pathways (CCP) program, in collaboration with Gateway Community College, offers a deeper understanding and real-life exposure in the fields of accounting, early childhood education, nursing, engineering, food service management, and computer technology. Students in the College-Career Pathways program, and those who job shadow, mentor, and intern, gain hands-on, authentic learning experiences. ECEs offer students a chance, through a relationship with UCONN, to take a wide range of first-year university courses in the high school setting, earning college credit. The American Experience course offering is co-taught through the English and social studies departments and represents the only cross-curricular course offering currently at Stratford High School. Student work shows the presence of formal research papers and projects that require the use of higher-order thinking, application of knowledge, and use of technology. Information literacy and technology curriculum is in place but is not necessarily fully utilized. Almost every classroom is equipped with a SMARTBoard, and teachers have access to mobile computer labs, as well as to the media lab and the library. Teachers use instructional and presentation tools such as NoodleTools, Prezi, and Photostory to differentiate instruction and enhance the classroom experience. Although the library/media specialist (LMS) provides training in technology for both students and staff, some teachers expressed the need for more in-depth professional development on the use of these programs and equipment. Hence, since the curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem-solving, higher-order thinking, cross-disciplinary learning, and authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school as well as stresses informed and ethical use of technology, the students will be successful in achieving the core values and expectations for student learning and will more readily see the connections between what is being learned in school and what they experience outside of school. (self-study, facility tour, panel discussion, observation, school board, teachers)

There is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum. The alignment between the written and taught curriculum is continuously monitored via formal teacher observations and classroom walk-throughs, the checking of lesson plans, and the administration of common formative and summative assessments in order to monitor implementation of written curriculum in the classroom. Department heads visit classrooms on a regular basis to observe instruction practices and adherence to lesson plans and pacing guides. These practices insure that the content is being taught in a timely and in-depth fashion. Lesson plans are collected and reviewed by department heads. Some department heads do this bi-weekly, and others less frequently. Lesson plans, pacing charts, and objectives are available upon request in each classroom. Essential questions, learning objectives, and agendas are posted within classrooms as well. Hence, students are aware of what they are learning and the expectations of the lesson. An example is the student and teacher critique worksheet used in an art class, which includes a rubric aligned with appropriate aspects of 7 Cs, student self-assessment, student self-reflection, and teacher critique components. More structured collaboration time for teachers will allow for more sharing of these lesson, strategies, and activities, which in turn will improve consistency and quality of instruction and student achievement. Therefore, because the school emphasizes clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum, parents and students are assured that the result will be a cohesive curriculum. (self-study, observation, school administrators, teachers, students)

Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation does exist between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district. Curricular coordination exists primarily within departments and between some academic areas. Extending the responsibility of department heads to the supervision of their particular discipline area within the sending middle school helps to promote vertical articulation of the curriculum, as does the department heads' close working relationship with the district's curriculum coordinator. Lead teachers and department heads conduct walk-throughs at the feeder middle schools in order to insure and improve vertical articulation between grades and schools. These practices have led to the formation of integrated K through 12 curriculum documents for better vertical articulation and the assurance of the coordination of curriculum within the district. The use of the recently implemented five-year curriculum review cycle has offered teachers the chance for input into the improvement of curriculum content, instructional strategies, and the incorporation of school learning expectations. The review process has contributed to improvements in pacing guides and structuring of lessons. The implementation of teacher driven curriculum revision has helped in preparation for the incoming Common Core Standards. Sharing of curriculum data (i.e., results of PBAs, CFAs) are posted in the school-wide program Inform Program™. This allows for teachers and administration to monitor and analyze student performance data and helps drive the improvement of curriculum. Lack of structured time for teachers does not allow for the discussion and review of assessments, which would directly contribute to the review and evaluation of all curricula. Therefore, since there is effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district, students will experience curricular consistency in terms of scope and sequence district wide. (self-study, facility tour, school board, school leadership team, teachers)

Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are limited to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities. It is becoming increasingly difficult

to meet the needs of all students in regard to 21st century learning. The limited facility and library/media center resources will all need to be upgraded in order to fully implement the curriculum. While the district has made efforts to provide adequate time and resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum, the existing time available for collaboration is limited. As Stratford High School continues to implement the collection of data regarding its 21st century learning expectations, more time will be necessary to see that these data are analyzed so that they might effectively inform the review and revision of the curriculum. There is ample technology available throughout the school in order to properly implement the curriculum. SMARTBoards are present and utilized in the vast majority of classrooms. Students have very limited access to technology via the usage of the media center, the school library, and the mobile computer labs. The library/media center (LMC) is often unavailable before or after school and during the school day. Many computers do not consistently function properly; Internet speed is slow which causes delays in lessons and student work, and there are few options for printing since printing has been centralized to cut down on the cost of printer cartridges. More importantly, the physical size of most classrooms does not comfortably accommodate the number of students present in those classrooms. Science laboratories are particularly insufficient to properly implement the entire curriculum. There are concerns regarding the ability to safely conduct hands-on, inquiry-based activities. Some science labs have been shut down due to nonfunctioning equipment and safety issues that would be in noncompliance with Occupational, Safety, and Health Administration (OSHA) standards. This has caused the inability of teachers and students to perform some laboratory activities present within the curriculum. The full implementation of the proposed renovation plan for school facilities will address those concerns. The location of athletic fields off campus makes it more difficult for certain activities to take place, which negatively affects student participation in these athletic and school-related activities. The location of those facilities is based upon land availability near the school. Many students supplement the academic curriculum by participating in co-curricular programs such as athletics, band, drama, chorus, and clubs. One of the more popular and impressive aspects of Stratford High School is the fine arts program. The band, chorus, and drama society parents are very proud of the quality and professionalism of all fine arts programs and productions. When the staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities, students will be better able to meet the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, facility tour, observation, central office administrators, teachers, students)

The district provides the school's professional staff with insufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research. Over the past few years there has been some turnover in the central office administration that has affected the curriculum evaluation and review process. Nonetheless, many content areas of the high school curriculum have been identified, evaluated, and revised or rewritten to ensure that the 21st century learning expectations are fully infused into the curriculum and that the school adheres to the five-year review cycle. This cycle is a key to maintaining current curriculum that is aligned with the 21st century learning expectations. Curriculum writing is accomplished through providing teachers stipends and completed by a collaboration of teachers during summer vacation. Teachers readily participate in the curriculum writing and review process. Although it is not structured or built into the normal school schedule, some teachers will coordinate and share resources to improve

instruction and student achievement. Because of the difficulty of finding common time to collaborate, not all faculty members are able to do so. When sufficient professional development exists, the school's professional staff has sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research, students will benefit from an aligned, 21st century curriculum throughout the school. (self-study, school board, central office administrators, school administrators, teachers)

Commendations

1. Teachers' extensive use of the school-wide analytic rubrics to assess the curriculum
2. The College-Career Pathways (CCP) program that offers students real-life exposure in the fields of accounting, early childhood education, nursing, engineering, food service management, and computer technology
3. The literacy and math tutoring available to assist with student success in academics as well as CAPT, SATs, and ASVAB tests
4. The formation of integrated K through 12 curriculum documents for better vertical articulation and the assurance of the coordination of curriculum within the district
5. The ongoing implementation and use of a five-year curriculum review and revision cycle that offers teachers the opportunity for input into the improvement of curriculum content, instructional strategies, and the incorporation of school learning expectations
6. The quality of the performances and presentation of fine arts program
7. The effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools
8. The alignment between the written and taught curriculum
9. The emphasis of depth of understanding and application of knowledge and skills in the curriculum

Recommendations

1. Ensure that all teachers fully comprehend the meaning and intent of each of the school-wide learning expectations, core values, and beliefs and their application
2. Ensure the systematic use of the school-wide rubrics in all disciplines
3. Design and implement more cross-curricular lessons and course work
4. Provide regular structured time for teachers to collaborate both within and among departments to discuss common assessments, curriculum coordination and revision, and to share concerns and strategies

5. Ensure that the facilities foster the full implementation of the adopted curriculum
6. Fully implement the district technology plan

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

Teachers' instructional practices are regularly examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. The majority of staff members regularly examine their instructional practices to ensure consistency and alignment with the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. In the spring of 2010 the Stratford Public School Board of Education approved the school's guiding document of core values and beliefs about learning for Stratford High School and is currently in the process of adjusting curriculum, instruction, and assessment to meet the indicators on the 21st century learning expectations using the adopted school-wide rubrics. Adherence to 21st century learning expectations is evidenced in course assignments, projects, and PBAs created across disciplines and required of students throughout the year, and the results of which are recorded on the 21st century report cards. The majority of the faculty members utilize the school-wide 21st century learning expectations rubrics, which include the six categories of learning expectations and skills for all students. Since teachers' instructional practices are regularly examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, students will have opportunities to practice and achieve the 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, survey, teachers, students)

Many teachers use instructional practices that support the achievement of three of the school's 21st century learning expectations by personalizing instruction; emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking; applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks; and integrating technology. Some teachers support the achievement of the remaining learning expectations, which include engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning, engaging students as active and self-directed learners, and engaging students in self-assessment and reflection. There are opportunities for personalization of instruction and enrichment through intensive math courses, such as Study Island, which is a SMART-based program. Another program, the intensive reading course, provides "differentiation days," utilizing VocabJourney, which is a student self-directed, computer-based program. Teachers serve as mentors through the Stratford High School advisory program, which was implemented during the 2011-2012 school year. The advisory is a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, assisting the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. As part of the formal connection, students have access to Career Cruising software in order to create personal goals. Teachers use this information to reflect on and address the academic, civic, and social needs of each student in their advisory group. The small size of each advisory group that meets twice per month allows each mentor the opportunity to personalize learning and ensures that each student has at least one adult with whom he or she can make both a formal and personal connection. The majority of faculty members emphasize inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking within the high school classroom. Teachers regularly use strategies such as document-based questions (DBQ), open-ended questions, evaluating sources for independent research and synthesizing information. Students are expected to create and defend arguments using textual evidence. Students also generate and answer questions by making text-self, text-world and text-text connections. Stratford High School provides opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skills to authentic tasks through various programs. The College-Career Pathways program is designed to provide high school students with an enhanced program in Career and Technology Education. Students can earn college credit in these courses. Stratford High offers pre-engineering courses such as computer

integrated manufacturing, biotechnical engineering, civil engineering and architectural, aerospace engineering and the capstone course entitled Project Engineering Design and Development. While enrolled in any of the Career Pathway Program, students are eligible to participate in a variety of authentic, off-site learning experiences such as job shadowing, electronic mentoring, internships, facility tours, and service learning. Stratford High School also provides a pre-nursing program, which can lead to a student's state registration as a CNA. The business department has currently partnered with Sikorsky Financial Credit Union to open a bank branch at the High School where students will be trained as employees evidencing application of their business finance skills. Stratford High School supports the integration of technology into teaching and learning in order to support the achievement of 21st century expectations. Daily activities in virtually all disciplines and associated lesson handouts utilize technology to present information, to engage students, and to check for understanding. In the intensive reading and writing courses using the LANGUAGE! reading program, teachers use SMARTBoard technology to facilitate the lesson. With the support of the LMS, teachers utilize technology programs such as medical careers, biology, social studies, and English to teach while using Animoto, Prezi, concept mapping sites, Glogster, and Scrapblog as part of class activities and performance-based assessments. Teachers use NoodleTools for research-based assessments and class assignments. This particular program allows students to cite sources through online notecards, create outlines, and export research into word documents. Over the last two years, laptop computers have been purchased for use in the classroom, and additional laptop and desktop computer labs have been established in the building for use of technology to support teaching and learning. Another program that has been developed during the last year is the "bring your own device" (BYOD) policy through which students are encouraged to bring their own device to enhance learning in the classroom. The new online Blackboard program, Gaggle, can be utilized by students to obtain information about class content and tasks assigned. The virtual learning classroom also provides support in learning content and sharing lessons with other schools through technology. There is an inconsistency in engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning. Student engagement in cross-disciplinary learning in general level classes is infrequent. Cross-disciplinary learning is limited to upper level classes in English and history which offer opportunities to connect literature to the social, political, and economic period of the time. Also, honor level and AP courses provide cross-disciplinary opportunities as observed in physics and math classes. In the classroom setting, self-directed learning is not consistent. The inclusion of PBAs provides emerging opportunities for students to understand this process and to apply independent skill development. Although programs outside the building provide authentic opportunities for active and self-directed learning, opportunities within the classroom are nominal. The primary delivery of instruction is whole-group lecture which does not provide students with opportunities to engage in self-directed and active learning or to experience differentiated learning experiences. Additionally, the lack of active student engagement does not allow students to take responsibility for their own learning. Student self-assessment and reflection is not an ongoing process within the classroom setting, although teachers are attempting to develop this skill through CFAs. When 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; and integrating technology, students will be better positioned to meet each of their academic, civil, and social

expectations preparing for college or career opportunities. (self-study, observation, survey, teachers, school support staff, students)

Some teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of students by using formative assessment, especially during instructional time. However, other instructional practices such as strategically differentiating, purposefully organizing group learning activities, and providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom are limited. Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations, but vary in degree by department and teacher. Although all of the effective instructional practices are present during instruction, teachers' personalization of lessons varies with regards to differentiation. Some teachers adjust instructional practices to meet the needs of students through the use of formative assessment to ensure the achievement of the 21st century learning expectations. Rubrics have been developed to provide common assessment of these skills in all disciplines. Support for students requiring remedial instruction is provided through the development of numeracy and literacy programs and works as a pull out support. CAPT data does support instructional adjustment and remediation provided through tutorial and numeracy and literacy pull out programs. Differentiation of instruction to meet the varying needs of students is inconsistent. Purposeful organization of group learning activities for strategic differentiation (ability, learning style, etc.) is limited. Effective co-teaching models to support differentiation of instruction is inconsistent. Formal collaboration between teachers and support staff is rare, in reference to the development of adjusting instructional practices to meet all students' needs. There is a concern regarding un leveled courses not meeting the needs of all students, although some preliminary data was positive particularly for students who had previously been assigned to lower level classes. Therefore, when 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, and providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom, parents and students are ensured that each student will be provided the support required to achieve the 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, observation, parents, teachers, students)

Teachers individually improve their instructional practices by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments and by examining student work, current research, and supervisory reports. Professional discourse focused on instructional practice and feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, and parents is limited. Formative and summative data is utilized to improve instructional practices including PBA, rubrics reflective of 21st century learning expectations and 7 Cs, CAPT, and to a lesser degree the examination of student work. Feedback regarding the effectiveness of instructional practices can be gleaned from individual student performance, but there is little reflective information from students concerning their own work. Supervisors provide feedback to teachers regarding their instructional practices as part of the teacher evaluation process. Parent participation regarding student achievement is inconsistent. Formal collaboration between teachers in examining student work is minimal as is formal teacher collaboration regarding instructional practices. Current research served as a basis for the implementation of the 21st century learning expectations and provided teachers with support in staying current and active in their research to promote lifelong learners. Hence, when teachers work to improve their instructional practices, individually and collaboratively, 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; and engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice, the teachers will be able to employ best practice for each student. (self-study, panel discussion, observation, parents, teachers, students)

Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, informally maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices. The majority of teachers maintains expertise in their content area and in specific instructional practices. Content related collaboration takes place informally within departments. Professional development opportunities are central-office driven, focused on data examination, student success plan directives and CAPT scoring instead of content-specific instruction. Some departments attend content-specific professional development sessions, especially those teachers involved with the ECE program or those who teach AP designated courses. Some teachers remain current with independent research and practices for their content area. Because teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices, parents and students can be ensured that the curriculum and instruction will be relevant and applicable to 21st century skills. (self-study, panel discussion, school board, central office administrators, teachers)

Commendations

1. The examination of instruction and alignment of instructional strategies with the core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations
2. The personalized instruction provided through remedial programs
3. The strategies used for inquiry-based learning, problem-solving and higher- order thinking skills
4. The many career-oriented courses that provide students the opportunity to apply authentic learning
5. The strong integration of technology within instruction to promote 21st century expectations

Recommendations

1. Expand cross-disciplinary opportunities within all courses
2. Engage all students in self-directed and active learning consistently within classroom settings
3. Differentiate instruction to include various modalities of learning
4. Provide ongoing opportunities for all students to regularly engage self-assessment and reflection

5. Provide professional development to all faculty members that focuses on differentiation of instruction and co-teaching
6. Provide time for formal collaboration between and among teachers to assess feedback from a variety of sources and to incorporate the findings into their instructional practices
7. Utilize feedback from a variety of sources (students, parents, teachers) to improve instructional practices
8. Provide professional development opportunities for both content-specific practices and new initiatives to improve 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

The professional staff regularly 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. Stratford High School, in collaboration with the Stratford School District, has been participating in an ongoing and formal process of using both formative and summative assessment to improve student learning and to reduce the achievement gap among a diverse student population. This process began in 2005 as a district initiative involving the development of CFAs to improve student achievement and to drive classroom instruction. In a systemic and collaborative manner, Stratford High School personnel have participated in the formation, revision, administration and analysis of CFAs including both written and performance assessments in all areas of content. The results of these assessments are regularly distributed for consideration of both individual student differentiated instructional strategies and programmatic improvements in instruction and curriculum via regularly scheduled data team meetings at both the departmental, school, and district levels. The school's 21st century learning expectations, as defined by the Stratford High School 7 Cs, are in the process of being embedded in all curricular documents and instructional practice. The 21st century learning expectations are clearly evident in student work. All six school-wide rubrics are regularly employed in all disciplines. Teachers reference the 21st century learning expectations in their respective classes and in department meetings. The formal implementation of the 21st century learning expectations is used throughout all of their classes. These efforts have resulted in Stratford High School closing the achievement gap across all minority groups within the last three years from being ranked at 139th out of Connecticut's 190 high schools in 2009 to 95th in 2012. Since 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, they are better able to base their decisions upon objective data. (self-study, observation, teachers, students)

The school's professional staff regularly communicates individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families and the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community. The formal process that Stratford High School uses to assess whole-school and individual progress was enhanced by the creation and implementation of the 7 Cs to reflect 21st century learning expectations. Based on this work, school-wide rubrics, PBAs, and CFAs were aligned with the 21st century learning expectations. These expectations and the corresponding rubrics have been folded into the existing assessment system and are evident throughout the school. Departments have incorporated these expectations into both written and performance-based learning assessments including portfolios, science journals, deep reading assignments, project-based learning, written examinations, the performing and visual arts, and physical assessments. Classroom teachers are able to record an individual student's 21st century learning expectations analytical rubric scores in the district assessment software (PowerTeacher). Through this process, parents and students become aware of class-specific expectations towards mastery of 21st century skills. This reporting is done every quarter; however, it is publicly available at the end of each semester. Thorough implementation of 21st century learning was reported out via PowerSchool. Parents received an alternate form of assessment that predicts their student's future performance once he or she leaves Stratford High School. Expectations outlined in the 21st century learning expectations were conveyed through the rubrics that were

provided by teachers on various forms of assessment. Hence, since the school's professional staff regularly communicates individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families and the progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the community, parents, students, and the community-at-large will understand the progress that individual students and all students are making toward achieving the knowledge, skills, and dispositions established for all students. (self-study, parents, teachers, students)

Professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. The professional staff at Stratford High School is in the process of using the assessment data that has been collected, disaggregated, and analyzed to assess student progress and to identify any inequities in student achievement versus classroom performance. However, there are several challenges that are evident in the domain of assessment at this time. It is apparent that in examining data, one of the primary difficulties remains in finding sufficient collaborative time to meet. The existing school schedule does not provide for any collaborative time during the regular school day. After school meetings for the purposes of discussing assessment data and considering instructional and curricular changes are limited to one departmental meeting per month along with biweekly, fifteen-minute data team meetings by department. Hence, the use of student data tracking varies between professionals in the building. Teachers and administrators recognize that purposeful and reflective review of data requires significant amounts of time scheduled on a regular basis to be used as effective levers for improvement. Data gathered from CFAs were judged to be anywhere from "useless to useful" and proved valuable at various levels. Staff members use a software program to analyze the progress of special education students and to determine individual needs for remediation. Furthermore, Stratford High School uses data from CAPT standardized testing to create math and English support classes for students who have shown deficiencies on state examinations. It is recognized by administrators and teachers that variation in practice relative to the communication of expectations as well as the use of formative assessments to inform instruction exists as the inevitable result of lack of collaborative time. Most teachers, individually, use a wide variety of assessments with rubrics that clearly outline learning expectations; however, the ability to "be on the same page" as other teachers in the same discipline and course level is difficult under the circumstances. Finally, the new 21st century learning expectations have not been in place long enough for staff to develop a common understanding for assessment and application of the new 21st century learning expectations rubrics. Common practices like close reading and department-wide PBAs are being developed and implemented; however, some departments are further along this continuum of improvement than others. Hence, when the professional staff regularly collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement, each parent and student can ensure that the professional staff will be in a better position to make decisions that will impact the learning of each student. (self-study, observation, panel discussion, central office administrators, school administrators, teachers)

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. Learning expectations are clearly stated within the Stratford High School curricular documents. Each department maintains the same expectation that all teachers will clearly communicate to students the 21st century learning expectations and their relationship to the school-wide rubrics. Teachers

are expected to post unit-specific learning expectations in the classroom for each unit of study. Usually, 21st century learning expectations are implemented only when applicable to the assignment (essays, PBAs, etc.). Students regularly use the school-wide rubrics and assignments that focus on the 21st century learning expectations. Parents, through the parent portal, can access assignments and student achievement data that clearly focuses on the 21st century learning expectations. Therefore, when teachers communicate to students, prior to each unit of study, the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed, students have a better understanding of what is expected and what each goal will entail. (self-study, observation, panel discussion, parents, students)

Prior to summative assessments, teachers provide students with the corresponding rubrics. Staff members review the components of the school-wide rubrics individually and at department meetings to ensure that the rubrics are correctly assessing the students' mastery of the learning objectives of the curriculum as related to the 21st century learning expectations. While apparent in student work, some departments do not regularly use content rubrics on a consistent basis. Rubrics let students know what is expected in an assignment and the means by which assignments will be graded. Students are regularly given rubrics with clear expectations before the assignment and they feel prepared for most assessments. Because teachers provide students with the corresponding rubrics prior to summative assessments, students are better able to understand what is expected of them in terms of what they are expected to learn and the degree of proficiency they should achieve. (self-study, panel discussion, teachers, students)

In each unit of study, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments. Student achievement is regularly assessed using a variety of assessments such as traditional pen and paper assessments, performance-based assessments, and project-based assessments. Teachers employ oral, kinesthetic, and written formative assessments. In class self-assessment is also evident within the school. Teachers use formative assessments such as exit slips to gain immediate feedback on topics/concepts students are learning. This ensures that teachers are aware of what material the student has mastered from the lesson and which material may need to be reinforced. The school also uses formative assessments, such as CFAs and teacher-designed formative assessment, to prepare students for larger summative assignments. The common benchmarks are presently used as assessments to determine if individual students, cohorts, and the school, as a whole, are meeting the 21st century learning expectations, while formative assessments are used as instructional tools to drive instruction and individual student academic progress. Teachers in the core areas individually employ a wide range and variety of formative and summative assessments in each unit. Hence, when teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments in each unit of study, parents and students can be assured that the assessment strategies will be more reliable in terms of assessing student learning. (self-study, observation, panel discussion, teachers, students)

Formal teacher collaboration on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments, is limited. The degree of creation, analysis, and the revision process for formative, summative, and common assessments is not uniform across all content areas. Core teachers administer district-wide CFAs. While there are certain times established for teachers to discuss CFAs, the establishment of formal time on a regular basis will be essential for further growth in the effective use of CFAs. Common midterm

and final examinations are employed by the majority of departments in the school. Teachers are not afforded the time to express their expertise in the creation and implementation of CFAs. Fifteen-minute data meetings and occasional department meeting time is not sufficient to meet the data analysis needs of the school. There is also a lack of adequate professional development to train teachers on how to use data to revise assessments. Consequently, when teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments, teachers will be better able to meet each students' needs. (self-study, panel discussion, central office administrators, school administrators, teachers)

Teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work. Most teachers write corrective and specific feedback on student assignments so students can improve their work. Many teachers also give students time to peer edit and opportunities for oral feedback during class time as a strategy to review the assignment in a timely manner. Teachers use formative assessments such as exit slips to gain immediate feedback on topics or concepts students are learning. Also, exit slips and other forms of formative assessment are given with the expectation of clear and timely feedback. The use of technology affords students the ability to submit work for assessment and to revise after receiving timely feedback from teachers. Students receive corrective feedback from teachers on a regular basis. Furthermore, teachers generally provide in-depth analysis of student work. Various questioning techniques are employed by teachers to determine whether a class is ready to progress in a lesson. Feedback is clearly communicated to the students in the form of analytic rubrics. Because teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work, both teachers and students can more effectively address existing needs. (self-study, observation, panel discussion, teachers, students)

Teachers sometimes use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning. Some teachers at Stratford High School use formative assessments to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning. Teachers often use formative assessment to adjust daily instruction in order to address student needs. Looking at student work is an important component of assessing and revising instruction and curriculum, and the majority of the examination of this work is completed during department meetings or with individual teachers sharing thoughts about assessment results. In certain classes, when students do not meet teacher expectations on the first attempt, they are able to revise assignments. Students are usually allowed to resubmit work in order to achieve at least half-credit for assessments. When teachers consistently use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning, they will be in a better position to assist students in achieving the 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, observation, teachers, students)

Teachers and administrators, individually and sometimes 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; and survey data from current students and alumni. While all departments currently use formative assessment data to inform their individual

instructional practices, faculty members have little or no time to collaboratively assess this data as a department to adjust and revise instruction and curriculum for the purpose of school-wide student improvement. The district uses assessment data that have been collected in “Inform,” a database that does internal data analysis, to help teachers improve instruction. In most departments, there is a lack of common assessments beyond midterm and final exams. The school has made great progress in implementing the school’s 21st century learning expectations. There is cooperation with the sending schools to track students throughout their academic career to insure success once attending Stratford High School. However, the high school does not formally survey current students or alumni related to their experiences. Hence, when teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, consistently 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; and survey data from current students and alumni, then they will be well prepared to make changes to all aspects of the learning process to ensure that all students can achieve the academic, civic, and social expectations for learning. (self-study, panel discussion, central office administrators, school administrators, teachers)

Grading and reporting practices are reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school’s core values and beliefs about learning. Stratford High School is working toward proper alignment of the grading and reporting practices with the school’s core values and beliefs about learning through the use of school-wide 21st century learning expectations. It is evident that while consistent grading and reporting practices are utilized for 21st century learning skills, there exists a lack of consistency on content grading within the disciplines. Teacher class expectations vary between and among instructors inside the same department. There has been a lack of time allotted for teacher collaboration in regard to aligning grading with core values and beliefs. Since grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school’s core values and beliefs about learning, parents, students, and the community-at-large can be assured that they are receiving valid and reliable information regarding student achievement. (self-study, panel discussion, parents, school administrators, teachers)

Commendations

1. The formal process regularly employed by teachers, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess whole-school and individual student progress in implementing the school’s 21st century learning expectations
2. The implementation of the 21st century report card issued in PowerSchool
3. The effective use of the school-wide rubrics in many classrooms
4. The regular use of a wide range of formative and summative assessment strategies
5. The use of assessment data that have been collected in Inform to help teachers improve instruction
6. The specific and timely feedback provided to students on their work

7. The increasing awareness of the need for formative assessment

Recommendations

1. Ensure that there is sufficient formal time for teachers to collaborate regarding data analysis
2. Ensure that all departments develop and implement content-specific rubrics
3. Ensure that teachers are provided formal planning time to develop, review, and revise common assessments
4. Ensure that all teachers use formative assessments to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning
5. Develop and implement a formal survey of current students and alumni on a regular basis to assess and record their experiences at Stratford High School
6. Ensure consistency in grading practices among teachers in the same department

Support of Teaching and Learning Standards

School Culture and Leadership

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning

5**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 school community consciously and by design 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. At the beginning of the freshman year, all Grade 9 students are paired, through the school's Link Crew program, with a student member to welcome them to Stratford High School and to assist them in adjusting to the high school experience. Student Link Crew leaders (i.e., juniors and seniors recommended by teachers, coaches, and advisors) are selected and trained by teacher mentors, and they work closely with the incoming students and serve as student ambassadors. In addition to the Link Crew program, the school solicits student volunteers to work with new students who are recent immigrants to the United States. These students work with their new peers during study hall and other times throughout the day to help welcome the new students and help them acclimate to the new environment. Student work is prominently displayed throughout the building and records of athletic accomplishment are displayed in the gymnasium. Students are aware of and share a sense of pride in the accomplishments of their peers. Moreover, the school has a formal system for recommending and recognizing students of the month by department. The names and photos of selected students are then prominently displayed on a bulletin board on the main floor of the building. With regard to school safety, the principal recently formed a school climate committee, comprised of administrators, pupil services personnel, and the school nurse, and charged the committee with reviewing disciplinary data and crafting a formalized plan to improve the overall school climate. The committee tracked data in the following areas: in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, unexcused tardiness, unexcused absences, students who are retained in grade or deficient in credits, and incidents of bullying and harassment. As a result, a plan was established to lower the rates for each of those categories. In addition, the building administrators have adopted the philosophy that students should be more responsible for themselves and have placed an expectation on students to "police themselves" by addressing inappropriate peer behavior when observed. Hence, since the school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning, the results are shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all that provides an environment where everyone achieves success. (self-study, school leadership team, teachers, school support staff, students)

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). All Grade 9 English classes and Grade 10 civics classes are heterogeneously grouped. Students in those courses are placed in classes without regard for their previous academic achievement, special education designation, or the levels of their courses in other subject areas. In some of these heterogeneous groupings, the school follows an inclusion model, and courses are taught by a regular education and a special education teacher and supported by paraprofessionals. However, there is little evidence of a substantive effort to foster heterogeneity in other courses over the course of the high school experience, although students are grouped heterogeneously for elective courses, health, and first-year world languages. Beyond the freshman year, students are enrolled in all core courses based upon a system of leveling. Moreover, there is an acute awareness of the leveling system within the school in terms of the expectations for student learning. Having only

two heterogeneous core courses serves to make the distinction between the levels more apparent and further polarizes students at different ends of the spectrum (i.e., those who favor homogeneity and those who favor heterogeneity). Additionally, despite the fact that the Grade 9 English course and Grade 10 civics course are technically heterogeneous, students may elect to take an “honors option” to receive honors credit while in the course. Hence, when the school is equitable, inclusive, and fosters heterogeneity demonstrated by the fact that every student over the course of his or her high school experience is enrolled in a minimum of one heterogeneously grouped core course (English/language arts, social studies, math, science, or world languages), all students will have access to a curriculum designed to help students achieve the school’s 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, observation, facility tour, teachers, school support staff, students)

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. All students at Stratford High School actively participate the school’s advisory program, where they regularly meet with a faculty advisor and engage in planned activities. Students are grouped by grade level and remain in the same advisory group for the duration of their time at the school. Students occasionally will have an advisor who either is or was one of their academic instructors. The advisory program meets every other week throughout the school year, and the school has developed a modified class schedule to accommodate the advisory period. Additionally, the curriculum for the advisory program was updated for the 2012-2013 academic year to better meet the needs of the students. All students now have a student success plan (SSP) and activities for the SSPs were added to the advisory curriculum. All students create specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely (SMART) goals in the areas of academics, personal, college and career, and civic duty that are revisited and revised in advisory throughout the school year. Grade 9 students also set up online portfolios and complete career and college planning activities using the Career Cruising system. Under the revised curriculum, students at all grade levels now engage in activities on bullying, getting involved in school, and college and career planning. Advisory topics are flexible and responsive to student needs or current trends and issues, as evidenced by adapting the curriculum to address the impact of the Sandy Hook School shooting on the Stratford High School community. However, the overall effectiveness of the advisory program has not been assessed. Since 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, each student in the school will have at least one individual who regularly serves as an advisor to him or her. (self-study, school leadership team, teachers, students)

In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff are dedicated to engaging in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning; the use of resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices; dedicated formal time to implement professional development; and the application of the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment. For the past two years, professional development has primarily been dedicated to completing the NEASC self-assessment. Teachers and administrators have attended conferences and PD seminars on differentiation, heterogeneous classrooms, Common Core ELA Standards, and school climate. In addition, faculty members have attended content-specific

programs including (but not limited to) sessions related to English language learners (ELL) or ESOL students, career cruising, teaching pre-calculus and technology education, and curricula integration. More recent professional development activities have focused on examining student work. As a result of professional development, teachers have begun to alter the approach they take to assess student achievement and use results of assessments to inform instruction. Teachers and administrators have taken advantage of a wide variety of professional development opportunities available outside the school, many of which were initiated by the school's central office. However, some professional development topics have been redundant presentations (i.e. Common Core State Standards [CCSS] presentations). At times, professional development is perceived by teachers as the delivery of mandated information, with little follow up or discussion of implementation, rather than an ongoing developmental process. Professional learning communities have not yet been implemented and professional development specifically designed for pupil services faculty has not been provided. When 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; and apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment to improve student learning, the school will be better able to develop and implement targeted professional development. (self-study, panel discussion, survey, school leadership team, teachers, students)

School leaders are in the process of creating a research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning. The present district guidelines for teacher evaluation and professional development are based on three publications: Connecticut's Common Core of Learning, Connecticut's Common Core of Teaching (CCT), and the Connecticut Framework: K through 12 Curricular Goals and Standards. Stratford Public Schools developed "Stratford's foundational skills and competencies," which define the standards for performance of teachers' professional responsibilities. All staff members are required to demonstrate mastery of these foundational skills, and are expected to seek opportunities for ongoing professional growth. Specific indicators illustrate examples of observable, tangible, and measurable behaviors that reflect the performance of the standards. There are four phases to Stratford's model of teacher evaluation: induction, developmental, professional, and intensive assistance. All phases include formal and informal classroom observations and feedback, goal setting, and performance review at mid-year and end-of-year. While much of the responsibility for faculty supervision and evaluation falls on "092" certified department heads, administrators co-sign the evaluation documents for individual teachers. However, the district is transitioning to the state's new evaluation process and has adopted the state 100 percent state model for teacher evaluation. The district is waiting for that model to be fully unveiled by the Connecticut State Department of Education. At this time, there is little alignment of the teacher evaluation process to the professional development offerings or to the instructional strategies that facilitate 21st century learning expectations. Additionally, there is concern among administrators and teachers that the sheer quantity of evaluation observations required will result in a sacrifice of the quality of these observations. Hence, when school leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning, the result will be improved instruction for all learners. (self-study, panel discussion, survey, school leadership team, teachers, students)

The organization of time is limited in its support for research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students. Stratford High School currently has, per day, six 47-minute periods and one 63-minute period that do not rotate. Most teachers in world language, health and physical education, music, art, and special education teach six periods per day and have one preparation period per day. While the current schedule is adequate to meet students' needs, limits on professional collaboration time between and among teachers pose significant challenges. New teachers receive two days of orientation training designed around procedural and personnel policies and regulations. Instructional rounds provide teachers with the opportunity to observe successful teaching techniques in a variety of classroom environments. Although they are at times usurped by central office agendas, regularly scheduled department and faculty meetings occur with agendas which focus on education techniques and improvements. Department meetings often focus on collaborative curriculum development, sharing of best teaching practices and improving student achievement as well as developing and modifying common formative assessment. These faculty meetings, held the first Monday of every month, are often agenda-driven and provide little opportunity for true collaboration. Department meetings are held with other secondary schools to develop and adjust CFAs, to look at student work, and to develop curriculum. To support research-based instruction, data team meetings are held monthly by department. However, limited formal collaborative time for data teams prevents teachers from significant analysis of student data. CFAs are disaggregated by cohort groups to assess those students that are currently proficient and who are likely to achieve proficiency in order to develop steps for instructional adjustment to increase proficiency percentages among cohorts. As a part of the pilot program, department heads and teachers are setting goals, implementing interventions, and tracking the scores of selected students. However, teachers do not feel that there is sufficient time for collaboration. Collaboration time among teachers occurs during faculty meetings and within departments during monthly meetings. While special education teachers meet with the department in which they primarily co-teach, there is no collaborative time set aside for active discussion with their regular education counterparts. It has been necessary for teachers to informally create their own collaboration time during prep time, lunch, before and after school, since there is no formal time for teachers to collaborate. School administrators have recognized that the current schedule limits opportunities for collaboration among teachers, and a committee has been formed that includes faculty members and administrators from both high schools in Stratford to research alternatives to the current schedule. The faculty members and administrators are working in committees in order to address the master schedule which would, among other things, address the lack of professional collaboration time among faculty. When the organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students, teachers and students will be better able to ensure that all students achieve the adopted learning expectations. (self-study, panel discussion, survey, school leadership team, teachers)

Student load and class size sometimes challenge teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. Although the average class size for Stratford High School is approximately 25 students per class, some courses have an enrollment approaching 30 students, and academic teachers can have loads as high as 143 students per day. In an effort to meet the needs of struggling students, identified students are placed in additional English or math intensive classes. The enrollments in those classes are kept to fewer than ten students per class. While the intensive English and math classes have been beneficial in meeting the individual needs of students, these classes have had a negative impact on the sizes of other classes in those

departments. Class size also varies based upon the levels and grades of particular courses, with larger classes in the underclassmen and heterogeneous (English and civics) courses. The social studies department has 1.3 fewer staff members than other subjects in the core areas, and thus instructors in this department typically have larger classes. When student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students, the focus can be on student achievement of the 21st century learning outcomes. (self-study, observation, teachers, students)

The principal, working with other building leaders, frequently and consciously provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The faculty and staff members believe that the principal and other school-based administrators provide instructional leadership that is consistent with the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. There has been a positive shift in school climate, pride, ownership and high expectations for both teachers and students. There is great enthusiasm among faculty toward the directions and initiatives recommended by the new principal. Although he has been the principal for a short period of time, he has sponsored "town meeting" style forums and opportunities for faculty and staff members to share their thoughts with the new administration. The principal supported the staff efforts to streamline and personalize the 21st century learning expectations in order to meet the needs of students. The principal created successful faculty work groups to recreate the consultant's work regarding 21st century learning expectations. These 21st century learning expectations and the 7 Cs pervade the school culture and drive planning, instruction, and assessment. The principal is dedicated to promoting the culture of 7 Cs throughout the school. He requires the 7 Cs to be posted in each classroom as a visual reminder of the 21st century learning expectations. During the 2012-2013 school year, teachers are clearly implementing the 7 Cs in their daily classroom lessons. The school handbook and student planner were designed specifically to emphasize the school's focus on 21st century learning expectations and the 7 Cs. The 7 Cs logo is prominently displayed on the front cover of the student handbook and in classrooms, hallways, and common areas. The principal's stated top priority is to develop and secure respectful relationships between adults and students. In the fall of 2011, the school administrators formed a school climate committee, comprised of administrators, pupil services personnel, and the school nurse charged with reviewing disciplinary data and crafting a formalized plan to improve climate. There is now a comprehensive school climate plan, and the principal meets weekly with the school climate committee. The principal has instituted a separate reporting system for individual student progress toward the 21st century learning expectations and has initiated a pilot project which uses the state-initiated school performance index as a way to improve student achievement. The principal meets on a monthly basis with the Stratford Education Association representatives and separately with the department heads. Additionally, once per month, the principal, department heads, and curriculum leaders meet to discuss data. Once per week, the principal e-mails staff members with instructional strategies and information regarding current educational issues and practices. There is a professional collection of books on key instructional topics housed in the library for all staff to access. Teachers have received classroom coverage so that they may pursue instructional rounds, each of which will focus on particular area (i.e. differentiation of instruction). When the teachers on rounds note larger trends, they have the opportunity of making recommendations to the district professional development committee. Recognition of staff and students occurs in a variety of ways. At staff meetings, the principal recognizes staff members who have implemented the 7 Cs or innovative teaching strategies in their classroom. Student accomplishments are celebrated through such activities as student of the month,

scholastic awards, service awards, CAPT breakfast, daily public address announcements for sports and arts accomplishments. School administrators recognized the need to create a more structured school discipline plan and developed a tiered approach to address classroom behavior and discipline issues that was implemented in the 2012-2013 school year. In terms of encouraging the community, the principal has demonstrated support for full access of PowerSchool's parent portal for all parents. He provides regular Friday phone broadcasts or phone blasts to the community on school initiatives, accomplishments and events and is planning to attend local Sunday church services to sponsor community-style forums following church services. Teachers and students perceive the principal and his administrative team to be very accessible and aligned with each other; each embraces an open-door policy. When the principal was absent for an extended time, faculty felt that, in his absence, the administrative staff actions were consistent with the principal's vision. Hence, because the principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, the result is a constructive school culture that helps all students reach their individual potential. (self-study, observation, panel discussion, survey, school leadership team, teachers, school support staff)

Teachers, students, and parents have varied involvement in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership. Students, parents, and staff participate in school-initiated surveys to provide feedback on school climate, advisory, school counseling services, and the 21st century report card. Through the use of a survey, faculty input was solicited and utilized in developing a revised schedule for delayed openings. Teachers were active participants in the development and codification of the school's core values and beliefs. Teachers also serve on various committees that are responsible for making decisions for school-wide initiatives, such as the school's advisory program and instructional rounds committee. During the summer of 2012, a committee of teachers worked together to revise the advisory curriculum, now in its second year. Teachers on the instructional rounds committee conduct observations of other teachers that provide opportunities for peer support and mentoring, as well as for general professional growth. Although Stratford High School has an active parent-teacher-student association (PTSA), there is little indication that they are actively involved as decision-makers within the school. However, it is evident that the association has a vehicle for contributing to the decision-making process, as demonstrated through their input on school surveys. Parents are invited to attend the monthly principal's advisory committee, but their role provides little in terms of a substantive role that promotes ownership. Yet, while parents do not have a defined decision-making role, there are opportunities for them to have meaningful involvement. With regard to co-curricular activities and school spirit related activities, some parents have been able to assume responsibility and sense of ownership. Parents organize booster activities for sporting, theatrical, and musical events, as well as for the annual post-prom night activity. Teacher and student participation in the PTSA is limited. Students have opportunities, through participation in student government activities, to experience responsibility and ownership. Stratford High School has both a student council and class officers, through which students can bring concerns and proposals to the school administration for consideration. Prior to the recent change in administration, the leaders of these groups attended regular meetings with the principal, at which students were able to bring ideas and voice concerns. The senior class worked with the administration to implement changes to the senior cafeteria, including installing a television and bulletin boards on which to hang information important to students. Because teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in

decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership, all shareholders feel a sense of responsibility and ownership in the school. (self-study, parents, teachers, students)

Teachers frequently exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to an increase in students' engagement in learning. The teachers at Stratford High School are integral to student engagement. In addition to their participation on various school-wide committees, teachers demonstrate leadership through mentoring students and peers and serving as advisors to the more than 30 student clubs and organizations in the building. The lunch committee consisted of a volunteer group of five teachers who met to improve the configuration of the lunch waves, resulting in the lunch period being adjusted from six waves to four. Likewise, teachers took initiative and worked to revise the curriculum for the advisory program to better meet the needs and interests of students. Many of the initiatives at the school, whether school-based or out-of-school, require teacher participation or coordination (i.e. Project Lead the Way, the Model UN program, and the internships through the school-based Sikorsky Credit Union). Furthermore, the faculty played a key role in helping to develop and now in continuing to promote and reinforce the school's 7 Cs. As a result of teachers who exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school to increase students' engagement in learning, students are afforded many valuable learning opportunities inside and outside of school. (self-study, parents, school leadership team, teachers, school support staff)

The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. The school board, superintendent, and site-based leadership team work together to achieve a common vision of a safe, supportive, nurturing school in which all students can achieve at a high level. Monthly reports from the school's administration to the superintendent and school board include meeting agendas and minutes. Secondary administrators' meetings (SAMs) are monthly collaborative administrative meetings with central office personnel and all secondary administrators. The superintendent meets monthly with all principals, district coordinators, central office administration, and the chief of police. The assistant superintendent shows a frequent presence in the building in order to support the principal. The board of education demonstrates its support of data-based decision making by displaying student data in its boardroom. The board of education initiated the elimination of homeroom and subsequently decreased passing time (2009), and negotiated the addition of fifteen minutes to the school day (2010), all of which led to increased instructional time. The creation of a bi-monthly advisory program (2011) and the inclusion of heterogeneous class requirements in Grade 9 English (2012) and Grade 10 civics (2011) resulted from deliberative and cooperative work among central office and school leaders. The school board has worked to provide Stratford High School with a \$53 million renovation project. The board of education actually requested more funds in the budget than the superintendent had requested. However, after two years of zero-growth budgets, there is some doubt about whether or not a budget with more than a zero-growth budget will again be adopted for 2013-2014. Because the school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations, a shared vision for improvement of student learning is being implemented. (self-study, panel discussion, survey, parents, school leadership team, teachers, school support staff)

The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. The duties and responsibilities of the principal, formally

outlined by the board of education, include authority over instructional program supervision, personnel supervision and evaluation, building management, fiscal management, and overall supervision of the day-to-day operations of the school. The unique situation whereby the previous principal is now the interim superintendent has facilitated communication and cooperation with the incumbent principal. The superintendent understands the needs of the school and is supportive of the principal. The principal conducts personnel interviews and makes final recommendations to the superintendent regarding hiring. He presides over school discipline hearings and makes recommendations to the superintendent regarding student consequences. When the school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school, the principal is able to establish a shared vision of the school and to guide the implementation of the core values, beliefs and learning expectations. (self-study, panel discussion, survey, parents, school leadership team, teachers, school support staff, students)

Commendations

1. The Link Crew program and freshmen orientation that creates a positive and supportive environment for new students
2. The teachers who informally collaborate during prep time, lunch, before and after school
3. The 21st century learning expectations and the 7 Cs that are ubiquitous and drive planning, instruction, and assessment
4. The principal's supportive recognitions and communications to staff and students
5. The celebration of student accomplishments
6. The instructional rounds committee that provides a meaningful way for teachers to assume personal responsibility for improving instruction within the school
7. The parents who have assumed responsibility and ownership of some co-curricular and school spirit activities
8. The teacher leadership demonstrated in a variety of curricular and co-curricular activities
9. The school board, superintendent, and school administrators who work together to achieve a common vision of a safe, supportive, nurturing school in which all students can achieve the 21st century learning expectations
10. The 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
11. The opportunity for all students to engage in at least two heterogeneous courses during their high school experience

Recommendations

1. Promote high expectations for all students in all classes at all levels
2. Develop a comprehensive staff development plan that provides meaningful training that meets individual and specific instructional needs as well as provides resources and training to effectively implement school-wide and state-wide initiatives and ensure that specific time is dedicated for both purposes
3. Implement community outreach plan to actively all parents, particularly those who have not been actively engaged with the school
4. Encourage the participation of parents, teachers, and students in school-wide decision-making that promotes responsibility and ownership
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of the advisory program in achieving the stated program goals
6. Initiate and strengthen initiatives to increase the involvement and leadership of all school community stakeholders

6

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

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. Stratford High School has strategies for students beginning with student intervention plans (SIPs), a general education initiative, and employment of scientific research-based intervention (SRBI) processes that identify at-risk students and implement effective classroom strategies. This initiative supports students' needs and their scholastic achievement with efforts aligned with 21st century expectations. The Stratford Public School Department has a centralized pupil services department. State and federal guidelines for initial identification and evaluation of students with special education needs are outlined in the Stratford Public School Department's Pupil Services manual. To enhance achievement in literacy and mathematics, collaborative support is provided during the school day within both the English and math departments. In addition, several programs within Stratford High School have been established to provide additional support to students in need. The crisis response team, incident management team, Housatonic Community College Bridges Program, UConn ECE, the district's ESOL program, pupil services counseling, and the LMC all provide students with opportunities to achieve academic, personal, and post-secondary success. Meeting individual learning needs through personalization is highly valued at Stratford High School. The Link Crew Program provides a student mentor for all incoming freshmen and for students transferring into the building. ELL students are supported through ESOL classes for academic support. The Wi-Mentoring program provides community-based resources to ELL students for career related exploration. The pupil study team (PST) meets regularly to review referrals made by staff members or family who have specific concerns about a student. The team, together with input from those who are familiar with the student, completes a referral form and a plan is developed to address the concerns; a second review date is set at the initial referral meeting. The response to intervention (RTI) team develops individual, classroom-based student intervention plans for teachers to use. The school climate team, made of student support personnel as well as all building administrators and occasionally district administrators, meets on the first Friday of every month to review behavioral, academic, and attendance data as related to suspensions, retention, failures, absences and tardiness. The data that is reviewed three times per year and SMART goals are developed and revised based on the data. Outside of the Stratford High School facility, the alternative high school program (ALPHA) provides an alternative high school program for students who are unable to attend a traditional high school program and the STRIVE program offers a post-secondary program for identified 18 to 20 year-old students who have completed the Stratford High School graduation requirements. Since the school assesses and documents individual needs in a timely and coordinated fashion, and uses directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, there will be support for each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations, the school will be in alignment with current state procedures for identifying students who are eligible for special education services, and intervention strategies that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations will be known to all stakeholders. (self-study, school leadership team, teachers, school support staff)

The school consistently provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services. The student intervention team (SIT) addresses

students who are most in need, and it provides comprehensive SRBI support to students through a prevention-oriented approach. This approach is used to specifically address the areas of absenteeism, behavioral concerns, poor or failing grades, and retention. The SIT responds to documented learning, behavioral, and attendance problems of students. A major goal of the team is to ensure appropriate identification of students who are at risk for long-term educational difficulties. Data are shared with faculty and staff members through the updating of SMART goals and SRBI intervention tracking. A critical piece of the SRBI work is communication with the families of students. Stratford High School delivers information via the multilingual school website; parent day and evening meetings; specialized outreach to individual parents and families regarding student learning as well as social and emotional issues; and lists numerous support services available to all students including information about career and college exploration and planning, test preparation, financial aid, and academic assistance. Brochures are mailed home prior to the beginning of the school year outlining services provided by the school counseling department and various community resources. In addition, the school counseling office has a wide variety of handouts and information addressing specific issues that students may be facing, including sexual harassment, stress management, and teen pregnancy. The program of studies provides a brief description of student services offered by the school counseling department and a description of services offered by the pupil personnel department. Grade-level programs and individual student meetings that focus on post-secondary college and career planning are scheduled annually for juniors and seniors, and, through direct mailings home, families are notified of these events and invited to participate. Many families typically attend the financial aid night program. School counselors consistently notify parents when concerns are raised about students' academic performance, attendance or behavior and share interventions that are being considered. Since the school regularly provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services, parents and students will know about and may take more advantage of the many services and programs at the school. (self-study, parents, teachers, school support staff, students)

Support services staff inconsistently uses technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student. The use of PowerSchool, parent portal, and IEP Direct in recent years provides the technological software for school counselors, the school psychologist, the school social worker, the library/media specialist, and the school nurse to communicate effectively with staff, students, and their families. These personnel as well as all faculty and staff members each have a computer and can access the school's database as well as the aforementioned programs when appropriate. Support services staff consistently references student academic and attendance information in PowerSchool as a counseling tool when evaluating student progress. Parents have been made aware that they can come to school and pick up their parent portal log-in information, but less than half of parents have done so. Students are not given their own direct access to this information. The school counseling office is equipped with four computers that provide students with access to search for information regarding post-secondary opportunities and to apply to colleges. Career Cruising, an Internet-based career exploration planning tool, has been introduced and will be used to electronically document student success plans. Electronic resources such as NoodleTools and Gaggle are introduced to all freshmen during orientation to the media center services. The school nurse documents relevant medical information in PowerSchool. Assistive technology is prescribed appropriately based on student IEPs. When support services staff regularly use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student, they will be able to deliver an

effective range of coordinated services for each student and to support 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, teachers, school support staff, students)

School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who deliver a written, developmental program; meet on an as-needed basis 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 inconsistently 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, but additional duties and responsibilities prohibit the effectiveness of delivery of services. The school counseling department consists of 4.6 full-time equivalent school counselors who service approximately 1,100 students in grades 9 through 12. The head counselor is assigned a full caseload of students in addition to other responsibilities that include, but are not limited to, developing the master schedule for the school, coordinating the student success planning program which includes the development and implementation of the Career Cruising program, chairing the school climate committee and coordinating both the AP and UConn ECE programs. One administrative assistant works with the school counselors, social worker and school psychologist. While the student support personnel are involved in all areas of addressing student needs including course selection, post-high school planning, special education services, group counseling and crisis intervention, the primary activity that the school counselors are engaged in is responsive counseling on an as-needed and often immediate basis. Regularly scheduled classroom implementation of the written developmental guidance curriculum, which won an award from the Connecticut Department of Education, is inconsistently implemented when time allows. The school counselors are responsible for ensuring that all students have a student success plan (SSP) that is maintained electronically using the newly acquired Career Cruising software. Through large group presentations and individual conferences, school counselors provide college and career information to juniors and seniors and work closely with students and their families during the application process. While counselors do meet with all students on a yearly basis as part of the course selection process and work with students to select courses based on a combination of teacher recommendation, progress towards completion of graduation requirements and student interest, the meetings are frequently brief and dependent on teachers' willingness to use class time. The course selection process is completed early on in the school year, prior to the end of the first semester, and teacher recommendations are often changed as the year progresses, sometimes resulting in uneven class sections within subject areas due to changes in student schedules. The school counseling department provides information regarding services available to students, both within Stratford High School and from outside agencies. There has been an increase in the number of requests for support that would typically have been handled by families contacting outside agencies themselves directly in the past. Data regarding standardized test scores (PSAT, SAT, etc.) and college acceptance rates are collected, but not consistently used to improve and increase services offered to students. When 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, students will learn and will be supported as they achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, school leadership team, teachers, school support staff)

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; rarely conduct ongoing student health assessments; and inconsistently use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community. One full-time nurse and one certified instructional assistant (CIA) provide direct intervention services for a population of 1,100 students. Due to the number of visits in the health care center, preventative services such as hearing and vision screening are not offered and other services are only minimally offered. The nurse provides all direct care while the CIA is responsible for most of the clerical work. Direct care consists of administering daily medications, handling emergency treatments, and handling daily visits from students with a variety of health issues. Sports injuries including concussions are also handled by the school's nurse. The number of monthly student visits to the health office totals 1,500-2,000, including repeat visits. The nurse refers students to appropriate outside agencies such as the Stratford Health Department and Dental Health Clinic when necessary. She is also a part of the school climate committee and the crises management team. Other than statistics on the number of daily student visits to the health office and medication records, there are no methods for collecting 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. When 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; and consistently use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, it will ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, facility tour, teachers, school support staff)

Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices in some areas but have an inadequate 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; and deliberately 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. The library holdings include 9,000 titles, including print books, e-books, audiobooks (CD and Playaways), videos (VHS and DVD), and other materials available to students and staff. In addition, the school has access to twelve paid databases selected to support curriculum. Destiny reports confirm that during the 2011-2012 academic year, 1,600 copies were weeded to produce a more updated, relevant, and appropriate collection reflective of Stratford High School needs and interests. There is one full-time LMS who is actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum, although she is not included in any formal way in terms of curriculum development or revision. A part-time secretary position was eliminated a few years ago, and student volunteers now perform some of the LMS's duties and responsibilities. A part-time audio-visual (AV) aide who has administrator network rights provides some technology support, allowing some of the instructional technology (IT) issues to

be addressed quickly in the LMC. The AV aide also has a variety of clerical duties in the district. There is an information literacy and technology curriculum which consists of a list of benchmarks based on the state standards. Instruction is based on these standards. The LMS seeks out teachers to collaborate on instruction. A one-day orientation program focusing on basic research skills is introduced to freshmen through their social studies classes. The LMS has promoted awareness and access to the collection's e-books and audiobooks, and to new magazines through displays, signage, announcements, and the school electronic newsletter. The LMS has also promoted smartphone apps to increase student access to Destiny, e-books, and databases. Database subscriptions relevant to the curriculum continue to be evaluated and adjusted to meet classroom needs in the most financially prudent fashion. On the other hand, the LMS has had difficulty scheduling classes for grades 10 through 12 due to conflicts. The LMC facility is open on a limited basis for students and staff. The LMS provides instructional support 25 minutes before school based on contract time, but there is no support for after school hours. The LMC is closed one period a day to facilitate the library/media specialist's prep period and it is closed for the entire day when she is absent. Recently, a teacher has been given a duty to monitor the room for three periods a week which has helped with some of the prep periods. Students use the LMC through classroom visits or during study halls. Due to the lack of coverage, there is a limit of three classes per day that can book the LMC. Each class can only reserve time in the LMC for a maximum of two days at a time. The LMS is responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning. There is 24/7 virtual access to the LMC collection through Destiny, the library management system. Students have access to databases, research tools, and how-to tutorials, and students use Google to make book recommendations. The LMS has introduced research tools, such as NoodleTools, and all students have received instruction on using Gaggle, the work flow management tool. The media center also supports co-curricular activities such as WitLits, a book discussion group. The LMS informally conducts 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 LMS uses Destiny reports, Follett, and Baker and Taylor collection analysis tools to examine the collection and circulation data to make continuous improvements to the collection. Library media center usage data are collected daily and reported monthly. Data are also collected on the number of classes scheduled in the LMC and units of collaboration. Google doc forms are used to survey staff and students about media center resources. The virtual library advisory committee was established to collect feedback on services. When the 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; and conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, the library/media services will improve and help to ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, teachers, school support staff)

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; 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 adheres to the federal and state laws regarding the identification, monitoring, and referral of students for special education services. Seven certified special education teachers provide support for identified students through a combination of inclusive classes and resource room. One full-time social worker is assigned to Stratford High School to meet student needs and to function as the 504 coordinator for the building. There is also a school psychologist assigned to Stratford High School full time to meet student needs and to function as the school's planning and placement team (PPT) chairperson. In addition, the school psychologist is responsible for providing school psychological services for students whose home school is Stratford High School for the following programs: ALPHA program, STEPS program, and STRIVE program. The school psychologist evaluates students that are in outplacement programs, such as ACES, throughout Connecticut. Each special education teacher is assigned to support a variety of core academic classes, typically in a subject area in which the special education teacher has previous experience. The special education teachers are responsible for ensuring that the accommodations specified in each special education student's IEP are being met as well as modifying assignments and assessments in collaboration with the subject area teacher, despite a lack of formally scheduled common prep time. Because of the all-inclusion model at Stratford High School, special education students are scheduled in the same manner as all students. However, this can often result in special education students being randomly scheduled across multiple sections of the same course, which leads to support staff (special education teachers and CIAs) not being as effectively used as possible. Special education teachers are assigned as "case managers" for all of the students in their resource room classes and are responsible for attending those students' PPT meetings and completing any triennial educational testing. They may also be assigned to complete educational assessments for students newly referred for evaluation. The social worker and school nurse are primarily assigned as case managers for section 504 students. ELL students are supported through the ESOL teacher and related services. When 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; provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students; and perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, support services personnel will continue to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, school leadership team, teachers, school support staff)

Commendations

1. The numerous programs to support potential at-risk students.
2. The information regarding student support services made available to students and families in a variety of formats
3. The implementation of the Career Cruising program for planning post-high school careers and managing the student success plan
4. The introduction of the Gaggle work flow management tool for all students

5. The school counseling staff who have assumed numerous duties and responsibilities
6. The nurse's participation in the school climate committee and the crises management team
7. The library/media specialist who actively seeks out teachers for collaboration
8. The well-staffed special education department

Recommendations

1. Ensure that all students and families receive the parent portal log-in information
2. Ensure that student support services personnel have adequate time to meet the basic health, social, emotional and academic needs of all students
3. Utilize data from a variety of sources (i.e. as alumni, students, standardized test scores, etc.) to improve services offered to students
4. Ensure that preventative health services are available for all students
5. Ensure that the library/media specialist is formally involved in curriculum development and revision
6. Ensure that all students have adequate access to the resources provided in the library/media center
7. Ensure that there is time available for special education and regular education personnel to collaborate
8. Consider alternative scheduling methods to allow a more efficient use of support staff

7**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 consistent 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, and sufficient instructional materials and supplies. The Stratford Board of Education holds monthly public meetings and the budget is a consistent item on the agenda. Meetings are comprised of board of education, Stratford Education Association, community members, and students. In addition, the board holds several well-attended budget hearings. Parents, school groups, and members of the general public are invited to voice their concerns about or support of the budget at these hearings. The faculty and staff members are given the opportunity to rewrite curriculum to incorporate 21st century learning expectations and Common Core State Standards. The school board allocated \$26,880 for professional development and \$11,357 for curriculum revision for the 2012-2013 school year. To support Stratford High School's 21st century initiative, three mobile wireless laptop carts were purchased to replace older models, and the older models have been moved to the library conference room as an additional student laboratory. Most classrooms were retrofitted with SMARTBoards and projectors. In addition, the 2012-2013 budget allocation for Stratford High School not only preserved all programs and teachers, but also allowed for the hiring of additional staff members including one part-time school counselor and one full-time art teacher. While there does seem to be consistent and sufficient funding in some areas, the adopted budget does not provide dependable funding for equipment. Students and teachers say that they do not have sufficient equipment in classrooms, labs, and the library/media center to print classroom materials. Hence, when 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, and sufficient instructional materials and supplies, students will be able to strengthen their social, academic, technology, and civic skills to prepare them for success in the 21st century. (self-study, school leadership team, teachers)

The school appropriately develops, plans, and funds programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant; it maintains, catalogues, and replaces equipment; and keeps the school clean on a daily basis. These activities and actions are carried out by the head custodian and his staff, an assistant principal, and the board of education plant operations and transportation manager. The head custodian submits work orders weekly to the board of education. There is a monthly phone conversation between the head custodian and the manager on the status of the work orders. The building custodial staff consists of seven full-time employees. Two are scheduled during the day and five work hours after the normal school day. Each night custodian is assigned a portion of the building to clean and maintain. The custodians are trained yearly, by an outside agency, in asbestos identification. Outside vendors are used to demonstrate the use of any new equipment or supplies. The custodial staff does an exemplary job keeping the building cleaned on a daily basis since the facility is used day and night almost every day of the week. The continuing education department conducts all of their programs in the evening on Monday through Thursday. Local organizations also utilize the facility throughout the year. Stratford High School is also the site for all summer school classes. The chief operating officer of the town is very responsive to emergency building issues. Many of the current work orders that do not negatively impact on the learning environment are on hold until

the building is renovated. Stratford High School's athletic facilities received funds for the renovation of Penders Field that include a turf field. When 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; and to keep the school clean on a daily basis, students and staff work in a clean, safe environment. (self-study, observation, central office administrators, school leadership team, teachers)

The community adequately 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. On an annual basis, the Stratford School District develops an adequate line-item budget to address future needs. The current 2012-2013 budget totaled \$93,992,529. It was an increase of \$590,347 or 0.63% over the previous fiscal year. The Stratford community consistently and adequately funds long-range plans with no major reductions over the past four years. The curricula are continuously revised and updated according to the yearly enrollment changes that are recorded and tracked via the tabulation report (TAB). The TAB report is broken down by course. This information is then used to address future course and staffing needs. For example, the Stratford Board of Education allocated \$559,314 for 7.3 social studies teachers for the 2012-2013 school year. The board of education and town council have agreed that the Stratford High School building is in need of major renovations in order to support a variety of options within the school that will help prepare students to achieve 21st century learning expectations. Hence, the Town of Stratford funds and the Stratford Board of Education has approved long-range plans to address facility needs through capital improvement and equipment programs and has approved the \$53 million building renovation plans. The technology plan has standardized hardware and software throughout the district, upgraded the fiber optics network connections, upgraded the e-mail system to Microsoft Outlook, implemented new network databases (i.e. Inform, ProTraxx, IEP Direct, SubFinder and Power Teacher), and installed a projection system in all grade 9 through 12 classrooms. The district has installed interactive SMARTBoards in most classrooms. The board of education has completed long-range capital improvement plans. The capital improvement and equipment program (2010-2012 and 2012-2013) is the most recent report. The reports are itemized, proposed, and include actual costs for building maintenance, building and educational enhancements, safety issues, heating and ventilation issues, instructional enhancements, classroom enhancements, climate control and energy savings and equipment for building operations. The capital improvement plan includes a proposal for completely retrofitting the science laboratories. Because the community has approved a bonding of \$53 million a construction and renovation project and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements, the facility will be modernized and better able to support programs and services. (self-study, board of education, central office administrators, school leadership team, teachers)

Building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget, while there is a varying level of faculty involvement. There are varying degrees of transparency in the budget process, but building administrators, faculty and staff members generally agree that the school is adequately funded. Teachers indicate their supply needs to their department head. From this list a report is submitted to the principal. The principal then submits the proposed school budget to the superintendent, assistant superintendent, and the chief

operation officer. The superintendent submits the proposed budget to the board of education for additions, revisions, and approval, and the board then submits it to the town council. The town council holds public hearings and votes on the proposed budget. When the faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget, administrators and faculty have input on the use of the limited funds available. (self-study, board of education, central office administrators, school leadership team, teachers)

The school site and plant minimally support the delivery of high quality school programs and services. Stratford High School was built in the 1920s and was expanded and renovated in 1989 and supports the delivery of quality programs and services. Classroom space is generally adequate. The LMC is underutilized due to its small size, although the present renovation plans call for the LMC to be expanded and relocated. The cafeteria, auditorium, gymnasium and locker rooms continue to support the needs of the various programs. However, the original facility design did not provide a sufficient number of computer labs around the various academic sections of the facility as well as in the LMC to meet the increased demands for the availability and integration of technology in support of student learning and the school's 21st century technology learning expectations. Current science classrooms/labs and computer labs are inadequate and additional rooms and equipment are included in the current renovation plan. The Stratford High School's campus does not provide enough athletic facilities to accommodate all athletic teams and physical education classes. Many athletic teams must travel around town to their practice or game sites or both and some teams must share facilities with other schools in the district. Although the campus does not have adequate space to meet the needs of all athletic teams and physical education classes, this deficit has not prevented the school from offering various athletic programs for the students. The grounds are landscaped but are not continuously maintained. When the school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services, teachers can focus on teaching and students can focus on achieving the adopted academic, civic, and social expectations for learning. (self-study, observation, facility tour, school leadership team, teachers)

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. School administrators conduct monthly fire drills and lockdown drills. There are a total of ten fire or lockdown drills throughout the school year, two bus evacuation drills and two yearly canine sweeps. For fire drills, teachers are given a designated evacuation route based on their room location. Most classrooms have the emergency evacuation route posted near the classroom door. The lockdown procedure is also clearly outlined in Stratford High School's crisis manual. Additionally, the fire department inspects the stage area of the auditorium before production week of any of the school plays to ensure compliance with fire and safety codes. The Stratford Health Department is responsible for inspecting the school cafeteria. The science department chair maintains an inventory of the chemicals used in the science department, and the chemicals are maintained in a secured storage area. All of the material safety data sheets (MSDS) for these chemicals are maintained in a notebook in the main office as well as in the head custodian's office. Accredited asbestos inspectors survey the building every six months for evidence of asbestos as required by 19a-333-1 through 13 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. Although the building is ADA compliant, the science labs are not. Since 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,

administrators, teachers, students, and parents can be assured that the primary focus will be on teaching and learning. (self-study, central office administrators, school leadership team, teachers)

All professional staff actively engage and reach out to 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. Stratford High School reaches out to less connected parents through the phone blast. A pre-recorded message is sent to parents via phone every Friday, which outlines the following week's school-sponsored events. Parents are also able to monitor student performance through the parent portal of PowerSchool, the district's web-based student information system. This resource allows parents to view student academic progress and attendance. The teacher websites can be accessed through the Stratford High School website which is capable (via Google translate) of translating all of the information on the school's website into thirty-five languages. The ESOL program is an example of the professional staff's attempt to reach out to less connected families. The Wi-mentor program that the English language learners (ELL) participate in is sponsored by the United Way of Coastal Fairfield County (CT) and is a partnership between the high school and the community agency. Stratford High School professional staff works diligently to have active parent involvement at Stratford High School for the betterment of the students. There are approximately 50 active members of the PTSA that are involved in the school community, and who are involved with groups such as booster clubs, chaperones, post-prom committees and other volunteer opportunities. When all professional staff members 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, all students will be able to achieve the 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, school board, parents, school leadership team, teachers)

The school actively develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning. Through the Career Shadowing program, each student participates in one or more real-world activities at a local business or service provider, such as a community center, library, college, or hospital. The town departments of finance, information technology, fire, and police enthusiastically host students for career shadowing opportunities. In addition to the School-Based Mentoring Program, Stratford High School has participated in an Electronic Mentoring Program, in which students in the Health and Medical Careers classes correspond on a weekly basis through e-mail with professionals and college students in their chosen field. The school also participates with Housatonic Community College in the Bridges program, which provides four workshops developed with input from local high schools to help prepare students for college. Stratford High School has offered and may again offer a pre-nursing program and is expanding its pre-engineering program. The health and medical and pre-engineering programs are guided by professionals from the medical and engineering communities who meet with classroom teachers to align the classroom curriculum with the authentic experiences. In addition, the school's Pre-Engineering Career Pathway is a certified Project Lead the Way program. Students collaborate during the year on a project design that culminates in an annual ACE Mentoring project presentation. The presentation is hosted by a nearby community college, and it includes an address by a college administrator who informs students of the college's offerings and advantages. Partnerships with colleges enable a number of high achieving students to participate in career technical education, AP, and ECE programs when their capabilities exceed the high school academic level. Local college partnerships have also

been established to support professional development programs for faculty members. To ensure that the curriculum is current and consistent, teachers in the Pre-Engineering program receive training during an intensive two-week summer institute at the University of New Haven. Mainstream classroom and content area teachers participate in Project EX-CELL, a comprehensive system of professional development for teachers working with English language learners, to improve the achievement of ELL students. In addition, student teaching and intern positions have been provided in the music department for a Western Connecticut State University (WCSU) student and in the guidance department for a Fairfield University student. Each year, a number of students participate as leaders in the planning and implementation of youth-oriented activities provided by community organizations, such as the South End Community Center, Stratford Community services, the Stratford Youth and Family Advisory Board (YASFAB) and the Sterling House Community Center. In the Smart Buddies program, Stratford High School student volunteers are trained to provide after school academic support, exercise, and a safe environment to elementary level students. The town recreation department provides volunteer opportunities for students at sports camps and youth programs, and offers summer employment as camp counselors and lifeguards. Hence, when strong partnerships with parent, community, business, and higher education exist, students are afforded a wide range of educational opportunities. (self-study, central office administrators, parents, school leadership team, teachers)

Commendations

1. The support from the community, parents, and town for school programs and services
2. The approval of a \$53 million bond to improve the school facilities
3. The parent and community support for the capital improvement plan
4. The wide range of school programs and services
5. The increased availability of technology (i.e., the laptop laboratory, mobile carts, and additional desktop computer laboratory) throughout the school including SMARTBoards
6. The cleanliness of the school building
7. The level of maintenance of the school facility
8. The updated athletic facilities
9. The strong parent participation in school support activities including the PTSA, fine and performing arts, booster clubs, chaperones, parent committees, and other volunteer opportunities
10. The establishment of positive relationships with area organizations and businesses that provide volunteer, co-curricular learning opportunities

Recommendations

1. Provide more printing opportunities throughout the building
2. Ensure that the budget process is transparent so that faculty members have more input
3. Provide reliable and up to date access to technology in the school building
4. Ensure that teachers and students have adequate and timely WiFi connections and Internet access
5. Continue measures as recommended to ensure the safety and security of students and staff
6. Ensure that all science laboratories are ADA and OSHA compliant
7. Develop and implement outreach efforts to actively engage families that have been less connected with the school
8. Pursue and expand student learning opportunities in the community

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 Stratford 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 Stratford 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 days (60) 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 112. 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.

Finally, the visiting committee would be remiss if it did not express its appreciation for the hospitality, openness, and candid responses extended to visiting committee members by the school committee, central office and school administrators, faculty and staff members, parents, and students. The members of the Stratford High School community made us feel welcome.

Appendix A

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

Commission on Public Secondary Schools

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

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

Appendix B

Stratford High School NEASC Visiting Committee

April 7-10, 2013

Donald D. Gainey, EdD – Chair
Nova Southeastern University
North Scituate, RI 02857

Andrew K. Rocket – Assistant Chair
Killingly High School
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Daniel Corbett
Brockton High School
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Jeffrey Longo
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New Bedford, MA 02740

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Naugatuck, CT 06770

Michael Mal
Bacon Academy High School
Colchester, CT 06415

Kristen Della Volpe
Litchfield High School
Litchfield CT 06759

Stephanie Nicholas
Crosby High School
Waterbury, CT 06705

Abigail DeTour
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North Branford, CT 06471

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Stacy DiGianvittorio
Oxford High School
Oxford, CT 06418

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Joel Barlow High School
Redding, CT 06896

Jeffrey Forman
Windham School Department
Willimantic, CT 06226

Jenny M. Solano
West Boylston Middle School
West Boylston, MA 01583

Appendix C

List of Commendations and Recommendations

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Commendations

1. The collaborative and inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices used by the school to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning
2. The 21st century learning expectations which challenge all students regarding academic, social and civic competencies
3. The consistent and prominent display of school-wide 21st learning expectations throughout the building
4. The prevalence of school-wide 21st learning expectations in school policies and procedures
5. The recent review and revision of the mission, core values and beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations
6. The use of current, professional research to inform the development of the 21st century learning expectations
7. The alignment of the mission, core values and beliefs and 21st century learning expectations to district and community priorities

Recommendations

1. Engage in regular, more dynamic planned review and revision of the core values and beliefs in learning
2. Develop and implement standardized school-wide rubrics in order to improve the inconsistencies with the 21st century report cards
3. Develop and implement a plan to consistently reinforce the expectation of character for all students
4. Utilize a variety of assessment data to monitor student performance regarding 21st century learning expectations

Curriculum

Commendations

1. Teachers' extensive use of the school-wide analytic rubrics to assess the curriculum
2. The College-Career Pathways (CCP) program that offers students real-life exposure in the fields of accounting, early childhood education, nursing, engineering, food service management, and computer technology
3. The literacy and math tutoring available to assist with student success in academics as well as CAPT, SATs, and ASVAB tests
4. The formation of integrated K through 12 curriculum documents for better vertical articulation and the assurance of the coordination of curriculum within the district
5. The ongoing implementation and use of a five-year curriculum review and revision cycle that offers teachers the opportunity for input into the improvement of curriculum content, instructional strategies, and the incorporation of school learning expectations
6. The quality of the performances and presentation of fine arts program
7. The effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools
8. The alignment between the written and taught curriculum
9. The emphasis of depth of understanding and application of knowledge and skills in the curriculum

Recommendations

1. Ensure that all teachers fully comprehend the meaning and intent of each of the school-wide learning expectations, core values, and beliefs and their application
2. Ensure the systematic use of the school-wide rubrics in all disciplines
3. Design and implement more cross-curricular lessons and course work
4. Provide regular structured time for teachers to collaborate both within and among departments to discuss common assessments, curriculum coordination and revision, and to share concerns and strategies
5. Ensure that the facilities foster the full implementation of the adopted curriculum
6. Fully implement the district technology plan

Instruction

Commendations

1. The examination of instruction and alignment of instructional strategies with the core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations
2. The personalized instruction provided through remedial programs
3. The strategies used for inquiry-based learning, problem-solving and higher- order thinking skills
4. The many career-oriented courses that provide students the opportunity to apply authentic learning
5. The strong integration of technology within instruction to promote 21st century expectations

Recommendations

1. Expand cross-disciplinary opportunities within all courses
2. Engage all students in self-directed and active learning consistently within classroom settings
3. Differentiate instruction to include various modalities of learning
4. Provide ongoing opportunities for all students to regularly engage self-assessment and reflection
5. Provide professional development to all faculty members that focuses on differentiation of instruction and co-teaching
6. Provide time for formal collaboration between and among teachers to assess feedback from a variety of sources and to incorporate the findings into their instructional practices
7. Utilize feedback from a variety of sources (students, parents, teachers) to improve instructional practices
8. Provide professional development opportunities for both content-specific practices and new initiatives to improve instructional practices

Assessment of and for Student Learning

Commendations

1. The formal process regularly employed by teachers, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess whole-school and individual student progress in implementing the school's 21st century learning expectations
2. The implementation of the 21st century report card issued in PowerSchool
3. The effective use of the school-wide rubrics in many classrooms
4. The regular use of a wide range of formative and summative assessment strategies
5. The use of assessment data that have been collected in Inform to help teachers improve instruction
6. The specific and timely feedback provided to students on their work
7. The increasing awareness of the need for formative assessment

Recommendations

1. Ensure that there is sufficient formal time for teachers to collaborate regarding data analysis
2. Ensure that all departments develop and implement content-specific rubrics
3. Ensure that teachers are provided formal planning time to develop, review, and revise common assessments
4. Ensure that all teachers use formative assessments to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning
5. Develop and implement a formal survey of current students and alumni on a regular basis to assess and record their experiences at Stratford High School
6. Ensure consistency in grading practices among teachers in the same department

School Culture and Leadership

Commendations

1. The Link Crew program and freshmen orientation that creates a positive and supportive environment for new students

2. The teachers who informally collaborate during prep time, lunch, before and after school
3. The 21st century learning expectations and the 7 Cs that are ubiquitous and drive planning, instruction, and assessment
4. The principal's supportive recognitions and communications to staff and students
5. The celebration of student accomplishments
6. The instructional rounds committee that provides a meaningful way for teachers to assume personal responsibility for improving instruction within the school
7. The parents who have assumed responsibility and ownership of some co-curricular and school spirit activities
8. The teacher leadership demonstrated in a variety of curricular and co-curricular activities
9. The school board, superintendent, and school administrators who work together to achieve a common vision of a safe, supportive, nurturing school in which all students can achieve the 21st century learning expectations
10. The 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
11. The opportunity for all students to engage in at least two heterogeneous courses during their high school experience

Recommendations

1. Promote high expectations for all students in all classes at all levels
2. Develop a comprehensive staff development plan that provides meaningful training that meets individual and specific instructional needs as well as provides resources and training to effectively implement school-wide and state-wide initiatives and ensure that specific time is dedicated for both purposes
3. Implement community outreach plan to actively all parents, particularly those who have not been actively engaged with the school
4. Encourage the participation of parents, teachers, and students in school-wide decision-making that promotes responsibility and ownership
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of the advisory program in achieving the stated program goals

6. Initiate and strengthen initiatives to increase the involvement and leadership of all school community stakeholders

School Resources for Learning

Commendations

1. The numerous programs to support potential at-risk students.
2. The information regarding student support services made available to students and families in a variety of formats
3. The implementation of the Career Cruising program for planning post-high school careers and managing the student success plan
4. The introduction of the Gaggle work flow management tool for all students
5. The school counseling staff who have assumed numerous duties and responsibilities
6. The nurse's participation in the school climate committee and the crises management team
7. The library/media specialist who actively seeks out teachers for collaboration
8. The well-staffed special education department

Recommendations

1. Ensure that all students and families receive the parent portal log-in information
2. Ensure that student support services personnel have adequate time to meet the basic health, social, emotional and academic needs of all students
3. Utilize data from a variety of sources (i.e. as alumni, students, standardized test scores, etc.) to improve services offered to students
4. Ensure that preventative health services are available for all students
5. Ensure that the library/media specialist is formally involved in curriculum development and revision
6. Ensure that all students have adequate access to the resources provided in the library/ media center
7. Ensure that there is time available for special education and regular education personnel to collaborate
8. Consider alternative scheduling methods to allow a more efficient use of support staff

Community Resources for Learning

Commendations

1. The support from the community, parents, and town for school programs and services
2. The approval of a \$53 million bond to improve the school facilities
3. The parent and community support for the capital improvement plan
4. The wide range of school programs and services
5. The increased availability of technology (i.e., the laptop laboratory, mobile carts, and additional desktop computer laboratory) throughout the school including SMARTBoards
6. The cleanliness of the school building
7. The level of maintenance of the school facility
8. The updated athletic facilities
9. The strong parent participation in school support activities including the PTSA, fine and performing arts, booster clubs, chaperones, parent committees, and other volunteer opportunities
10. The establishment of positive relationships with area organizations and businesses that provide volunteer, co-curricular learning opportunities

Recommendations

1. Provide more printing opportunities throughout the building
2. Ensure that the budget process is transparent so that faculty members have more input
3. Provide reliable and up to date access to technology in the school building
4. Ensure that teachers and students have adequate and timely WiFi connections and Internet access
5. Continue measures as recommended to ensure the safety and security of students and staff
6. Ensure that all science laboratories are ADA and OSHA compliant
7. Develop and implement outreach efforts to actively engage families that have been less connected with the school

8. Pursue and expand student learning opportunities in the community