

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE

Southington High School

Southington, Connecticut

May 2 - 5, 2010

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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 Southington 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 Southington 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 team.

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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

- Mission and Expectations for Student Learning
- Curriculum
- Instruction
- Assessment of Student Learning

Support Standards

- 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 Southington High School, a committee of 18 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 18 students and seven parents.

The self-study of Southington High School extended over a period of 14 school months from November 4, 2008 to March 2, 2010. 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, Southington High School also used questionnaires developed by The Global Institute 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 17 evaluators was assigned by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Southington High School. The Committee members spent four days in Southington, 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, central office administrators, and vocational institutions, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Southington High School. The visiting team built its professional judgment on evidence collected from the following sources:

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 68 hours shadowing 17 students for a half day
- a total of 22 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 34 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, teachers, and support staff
- the examination of student work, including a selection of work collected by the school

Each conclusion on the report was agreed to by team 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 team's judgment will be helpful to the school as it works to improve teaching and learning and to better meet Commission Standards.

Overview of Findings

Although the conclusions of the visiting committee on the school's adherence to the Commission's Standards for Accreditation appear in various sections of this report, the committee wishes to highlight some findings in the paragraphs that follow. These findings are not intended to be a summary of the report.

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 Southington High School.

Teaching and Learning at Southington High School

Southington High School either has in place or is working toward developing all of the components for improving teaching and learning.

The mission and expectations for student learning were collaboratively developed by faculty members, students, parents, and community members. Although the mission represents the fundamental values and beliefs of the school community about student learning, there is confusion about the relationship between student grades in courses and the feedback they receive through the school-wide rubrics. There is also concern that the rubrics do not yet provide meaningful feedback for students.

Southington High School is committed to the Understanding by Design (UbD) model of curriculum development and has made significant progress in rewriting its curriculum documents in this format. However, progress has recently stalled, and there is more work to be done to document the elective courses and courses in several other departments. Some of the written curricula exclude relevant school-wide learning expectations, and the school-wide rubrics must be incorporated into the curriculum documents as part of the assessment. In addition, it is not clear from the curriculum documents what expectations for learning are targeted by each subject area.

Although the UbD model of curriculum development stresses inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking, the "taught curriculum" varies depending upon a student's placement in academic level. Upper level classes regularly engage students in higher order thinking, but the lower level instruction is often focused on knowledge acquisition and recall. The use of feedback and reflection is not a significant part of the Southington High School culture. Most teachers do not seek feedback from students, parents, supervisors, or peers, and student self-assessment, self-evaluation, and self-regulation are not part of the culture of the school. The use of the school-wide rubrics is uneven across the school, and teachers indicated a need for professional development in the use and interpretation of rubrics to improve instruction at all levels.

The Southington High School Learner Expectations Report Card has been created to assess and communicate to students and parents individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations for learning based on school-wide rubrics. However the school has yet to establish a process to communicate the school's progress to the community. Similarly, it

continues to work toward developing the methods to assess progress on the school's civic and social expectations for learning. While some teachers base classroom assessment of student learning on school-wide rubrics, most continue to use course-specific rubrics, which may or may not relate to the school-wide academic expectations. Teachers use a variety of assessment techniques, such as essays, labs, technology integration, debates, cooperative learning, student-centered learning, demonstrations, and PowerPoint presentations. Lacking, however, is a focus on formative assessment strategies that enable teachers to assess how well students are doing in achieving the day-to-day learning objectives. Teachers do not meet formally to examine student work for the purposes of improving curriculum and instruction.

Support of Teaching and Learning at Southington High School

The principal of Southington High School has significant autonomy in making important decisions and takes an active role in developing policies that lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning. She uses a "theory of action" approach to help focus the school improvement program and to prevent "initiative overload." She engages all stakeholders in shared leadership which is important in this very large comprehensive high school. Student grouping patterns, however, do not reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, reflect current research and best practices, or support the achievement of the school's mission and expectations. This is an area in which the school can improve. In addition, the schedule does not provide adequate time for collaboration within and across departments, impeding sharing of instructional and assessment strategies as well as the development, revision, and refinement of curriculum. The schedule may also prevent the implementation of a program to personalize each student's learning experiences at Southington High School.

Southington High School offers a myriad of support services that are consistent with the school's mission and expectations for learning. Students are encouraged to make deliberate choices as they pursue their interests while always being cognizant of the welfare of others. Health services are not only focused on prevention and healthy choices but are concerned with the social and emotional well-being of all students. Special education services support students through team taught classes, inclusion, academic support, transitional activities, and individual educational plans. School counselors support academic and personal growth with programs such as transitioning from the middle schools, bullying prevention, preparing for mid-year exams, and testing for career interests. The Ninth Grade Academy program provides entering freshmen a transitional experience as they move from a relatively small middle school environment to the large comprehensive high school. The ALTA program provides students who struggle with a traditional high school setting, the opportunity to learn and grow in a smaller, less structured environment.

Parents and community members are strong partners highly invested in the education of students at Southington High School. The school uses print, electronic, multimedia, and personal communication methods to engage parents and the community. Local business and higher education partners support the school's efforts to provide meaningful learning experiences for students. Budgetary restrictions have strained the physical plant that lacks meeting space, private locations for the necessary phone calls to parents, and classroom space. Routine maintenance and upkeep is also strained by recent reductions in the budget. Effective programs and school pride carry the school as the community struggles to provide for all student needs.

School and Community Profile

The Community

Southington High School is located in the town of Southington, Connecticut, approximately twenty miles southwest of Hartford, and nine miles east of Waterbury, and includes the townships of Plantsville, Milldale, and Marion. The town's area is 36.8 square miles (ranking 40th out of 169 in the state). The building that the school now occupies was opened in 1973 as a three-year high school. Two substantial additions were completed in 1987 and 1994, the last allowing the school to house the ninth grade. In 2007, a freestanding Agriculture Science and Technology building was completed. The surrounding residential neighborhood provides a safe setting for the school. Local roads in the area have been widened to provide easy access to major state highways and from the town's police and fire services, each within two miles of the school.

Southington is predominately a white, middle-class, suburban community. Its economic development reflects a regional shift from production to service industries. This shift has caused an adjustment in the character of Southington's population from blue-collared working class to more of a white-collared, middle-class community. The non-white population has increased somewhat over the past two decades, partly due to immigration, but according to the 2000 census, of the 40,000 Southington residents, less than 4% of the population remains non-white. Southington provides education for 6,726 students in its district. Of the 2,126 students enrolled at Southington High School, twenty students speak Spanish; thirty-two speak Polish; eight speak Albanian; eight speak Gujarati; seven speak Urdu, four speak Chinese; four speak Philipino, two speak Vietnamese, and one each speak Hindi, Korean, Thai, Turkish, Tagalog, and German as their primary languages. No students participate in Chapter I.

The median income is \$73,357 per household. The current unemployment rate of the community is 4.0% (State Statistics, 2008), and the percentage of families in Southington that have incomes below the poverty level is 3.3% (State Statistics, 2008). Part-time employment opportunities exist in many restaurants, department and grocery stores, and at Lake Compounce, a local amusement park. The staple businesses of Southington include retail, services, and healthcare. Local industries and businesses that top Southington's Grand List are: Hartcomm Corporation, Mulberry Gardens, Central Connecticut Senior Care, Hartford Insurance, Yarde Metals, Medex Inc. and The Hospital of Central Connecticut.

The town has pursued a rather aggressive building plan, constructing and/or adding on to a number of municipal buildings. A new police station, an addition to the town hall, and additions and renovations to all of the elementary schools are nearing completion. Furthermore, a new building was completed for the Southington Water Department.

The School, the Students, and the Teachers

The Southington Public School System includes eight public elementary schools with a total enrollment of 3,167 students, two middle schools with a combined enrollment of 1,559 students, and Southington High School with an enrollment of 2,126 students. Southington High School is comprised of grades 9-12. For the past two years, average daily attendance is as follows: for 2007-2008: 96.14% of ninth graders, 95.62% of tenth graders, 95.42% of eleventh graders, and 93.96% of twelfth graders; for 2008-2009: 95.69% of ninth graders, 95.52% of tenth

graders, 94.48% of eleventh graders, and 93.74% of twelfth graders. Average teacher absence due to illness or personal time was 10.7 days in 2007-2008 and 9.5 days in 2006-2007. Southington High School employs 191 certified staff members and 77 uncertified staff members as well as five full-time administrators. The full-time equivalent for Southington High staff is as follows: 143.2 teachers and instructors, 5.4 paraprofessional instructional assistants, 19.5 special education teachers and instructors, 25.98 special education paraprofessional instructional assistants, 3.0 library/media specialists and assistants, 5 administrators, 2 department facilitators, 12 department chairs, 0.2 instructional specialists who support teachers, 10 school counselors, 2.5 social workers, 2 psychologists, 3.8 school nurses, 41.8 other staff providing non-instructional services and support.

The state average per pupil expenditure for the past two years was \$12,151. Of the \$10,892 Southington spends per student, 63.8% comes from local resources, 1.7% comes from state resources, 25.3% from federal resources, and 3.7% from other sources. Tuition paid by non-resident students enrolled in the school ranges from \$2,500 for Project Choice to \$13,986 for agriculture science and technology students with special needs. Six Project Choice students currently attend the high school. Seventy-four students are non-residents currently participating in the Agriculture Science and Technology Program.

The ethnic/racial groups that comprise the student body are: 0.1% American Indian, 2.3% Asian American, 1.8% African American, 4.1% Hispanic, and 91.7% Caucasian. 1.2% of the student body participates in English Language Learner (ELL) courses. No significant changes have occurred in the school's racial/ethnic composition, nor have any unusual variances occurred in grade distribution.

In 2007-2008, 391 (or 76.8%) seniors at the high school took the SAT and/or ACT. In the same year, 98% of the class graduated. In 2007, 83.9% of students went on to a post-secondary education; 10.3% went on to immediate employment or the military. In 2008, 84% of students went on to a post-secondary education, and 11% went on to immediate employment or the military. The dropout rate for 2006-2007 is 1.3% as opposed to the state average of 1.8%. For 2007-2008, the rate is 1.2% compared to the state average of 1.7%. The high school currently doesn't track college performance of graduated seniors. Discipline issues have resulted in 29 students having been expelled in the past two years; also, 248 have received in-school suspensions and 626 have received out-of-school suspensions.

The state requires schools to provide at least 900 hours of instruction per year and 180 school days. Southington provides 948 hours of instruction per year during 181 school days. A school day is composed of eight periods each forty-five minutes long, and a four-minute homeroom period begins each day. All students at Southington High School have the opportunity to opt for the appropriate level of instruction for most course offerings. Students may enroll in levels I through IV, Level IV being the honors level. Advanced Placement courses are also offered to all students who have the appropriate prerequisites.

Overall, Southington High School's class size averages 18.6 students. Enrollment in courses offered through nine departments in the following academic departments are as follows: Language Arts has 2,082 students with an average class size of nineteen; Mathematics has 1,941 students with an average class size of eighteen; Science has 1,780 students with an average class size of nineteen; Social Studies has 1,878 students with an average class size of

twenty-one; World Languages has 1,296 students with an average class size of seventeen; Health/PE has 2,001 students with an average class size of twenty-four; Special Education has 221 students with an average self-contained class size of seven; Agriculture Science and Technology Department has 118 students. The Business, Technology Education, Family Consumer Sciences, Art, and Music Departments have a combined enrollment of 2,298 students with an average class size of seventeen.

The school offers several other academic educational programs and/or services at the main facility or nearby facilities; Tunxis and Naugatuck Community Colleges Partnership programs offer juniors and seniors college classes for college credits. The Business, Technology Education, and Family and Consumer Sciences Departments offer College Careers Pathways Program, also through Tunxis and Naugatuck Community Colleges, where students earn college credits while taking classes in high school. Early College Experience offers three courses in Agriculture, Family and Consumer Sciences and World Language. In these programs, college credits are earned through the University of Connecticut. Project Lead the Way is a pre-engineering program that provides college credit in four of its five classes.

Bristol Technical Education Center provides students with intensive advanced technical training for high school credit. Wilcox Technical School offers similar courses. Admittance to both of these institutions is contingent upon an application process. Student participation also is possible in adult education and continuing education. In addition, the school provides employment opportunities, school-to-career opportunities, and job shadowing/apprenticeship programs.

Approximately 50% of the student body takes part in interscholastic competitive athletics, and approximately 70% of students participate in school activities. Southington High School students continue to earn recognition for their academic, co-curricular and extracurricular activities. The Girls' Volleyball Team has been awarded the American Volleyball Coaches Association Team Academic Award. Six talented students were awarded certificates by the Connecticut Art Education Association. Members of FFA, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), DECA - an International Association of Marketing Students, Family Career and Community Leaders of America, and World Language Clubs won recognition at the state and national levels. For the past twenty years, FBLA has finished first or second in state competitions. DECA was awarded outstanding chapter for 2009. This past year the SHS Jazz Ensemble earned a third-place finish at the Berklee College of Music Jazz Festival and was selected to play at West Point, and they have been state and New England champions for 2007 and 2008.

Additionally, students excel at all levels of athletics. Twenty-six teams compete at the freshman, junior varsity, and varsity levels. This past year Southington High School sponsored its first Unified Sports team, which medaled at a state-wide tournament. In addition, five of the teams won their conference championships, and fourteen teams qualified for the state tournaments.

Parental involvement occurs on both a formal and informal level. At the beginning of the year, parents are invited to meet teachers, hear course expectations and learn course curricula at a school-wide open house. The school conducts parent-teacher conferences one day per year. These conferences are initiated by the school. They focus on improving the quality of

individualized instruction for the student through effective communication with the parents, contributing to academic performance and social well-being. Informally, parents maintain communication with teachers through phone, scheduled appointments, and e-mail. School counselors monitor students throughout the year and communicate with parents regarding students' schedules and post-secondary planning.

The Teachers

Seventy-three percent of the faculty at Southington High School possesses a master's degree or higher. No teachers teach out of their area of certification, and 39 teachers have provisional teaching certificates. Most teachers have five classes daily, and the majority of department chairs teach three classes in addition to their administrative duties. However, some department chairs teach additional classes.

The average class size for teachers by semester in the different content areas is as follows: Language Arts (Semester 1): Average: 19.0, (Semester 2): Average: 18.9; Mathematics (Semester 1): Average: 17.6, (Semester 2): Average: 16.6; Science (Semester 1) Average: 19.5, (Semester 2): Average: 19.3; Social Studies (Semester 1): Average: 20.4, (Semester 2): Average: 21.2; World Language (Semester 1): Average: 17.1, (Semester 2): Average: 17.1; Business/ Art/Technology/Family Consumer Science/Music, (Semester 1): Average: 15.8, (Semester 2): Average: 16.5; Health/PE (Semester 1): Average: 27.5, (Semester 2): Average: 25.4; Special Education (Semester 1): Average: 6.7, (Semester 2): Average: 6.7

Teachers are required to attend one one-hour faculty meeting per month, one one-hour department meeting per month, and one two-hour curricula development meeting per month. Additionally, teachers receive 24 hours of professional development per year. Opportunities to earn CEUs in technology are also provided throughout the year.

School Initiatives

Several recent school initiatives have been implemented to improve student learning. A Ninth Grade Academy has been in place for three years to personalize the high school experience for incoming ninth graders. A separate area of the school is designated for the academy, which has its own administrator and school counselors. Another initiative, the school's writing lab, is overseen by the language arts department and assists classes and individuals with assignments and development of skills. A math lab, overseen by the math department, has been put into operation this year. The technology education and special education departments have implemented a construction and manufacturing initiative to foster student interest in these areas. Each student at Southington High School has an Individual Transition Portfolio, which chronicles a students' progress toward an individual post-secondary plan. These portfolios focus on self-awareness, career awareness, and college/training career pathways.

The most noticeable change in our facility is the addition of a new Agriculture Science and Technology building. The construction and equipment was funded by a state grant for regional agricultural programs. This new 28,000 square foot facility affords students the opportunity to study the same curriculum as experienced in other regional agriculture science programs. New classrooms include a biotechnology lab, aquatics lab, large animal lab, and an

improved plant lab. The increased classroom area will also promote more interdisciplinary activities between the program's students and the other curricular departments. The new building was constructed on the site of the high school's tennis courts. Seven new courts replace the old ones that have enhanced the physical education curriculum and more specifically the tennis athletic program.

Projects or grants currently in operation in this school that are financed by federal, state or municipal agencies include the Perkins Grant for Career Technical Education Programs which include Agriculture Science and Technology, Business Education, Family and Consumer Sciences and Technology Education. Funding is used in career and technical areas to purchase supplies and equipment and to fund student field trips and professional development. Several projects benefitting students are currently funded by public and private foundations and agencies. Various scholarships sponsored by the school and the community are awarded to graduating seniors. The United Way has provided a grant in conjunction with Connecticut Mental Health Affiliates (C.M.H.A.) for the Alternative to Suspension Program and substance abuse. A Target Grant funded a fieldtrip to Camp Sloper for team building. A Calvanese Foundation Grant funds Alternative to Suspension which promotes better decision making in conjunction with the Y.M.C.A.

School Improvement Planning

Southington High School's goal for the 2006-2007 school year was to improve student performance on external assessments by focusing on the standards that the tests were designed to measure. A committee of administrators, special education and content coordinators, teachers, parents, and students composed a School Improvement Team to coordinate efforts to improve student performance on the Connecticut Academic Performance Tests. The 2007 CAPT scores evidenced significant improvement. The percentage of students meeting the state's goal increased by 8.3% in science, 8.3% in writing, 7% in math, and 9.3% in reading. Ongoing professional development workshops and curriculum revision continue to focus on further improvement of students' CAPT scores. Last year, 333 students enrolled in AP classes, an increase of thirty-eight students as compared to the 2005-2006 enrollment. The number of students taking AP exams increased by 18.9%.

For the past two years, students who were failing two core academic subjects had the opportunity to participate in an after-school program that met twice a week. Four teachers worked with students to help them with homework and long-term assessments. Many of the students evidenced improved classroom performance through this program. This year, because of insufficient funds, the program was suspended.

Southington High School offers a continuum of special education and related services to meet the individual needs of identified special education students. These services include academic support classes in which students receive additional support from members of the special education staff, the Learning for Academic Progress Program that focuses on reading improvement, writing improvement, and increased ability to utilize content-based information, and team taught classes in which a special education and regular education teacher work together to deliver instruction in classes containing both regular and special education students. However, common preparatory time is not consistently given to co-teaching partners. For students in need of more specific services, The Therapeutic Education Program is comprised of

four areas: academic engagement in a smaller setting, individual and group therapies, assessment/communication, and rewards for students who are unmotivated, nontraditional learners or who are transitioning from an alternate placement. A clinical psychologist works with the staff and students of this program.

The Southington Alternative Education (ALTA) Program is also a part of the Southington Public Schools and serves at-risk students grades 9-12 in a separate facility. The program has been in operation since 1989 and serves as a last chance opportunity for students to earn a high school diploma. ALTA graduates leave the program with a stronger educational foundation, increased self-confidence, strengthened family ties, healthy adult relationships and an inspiration to further their education. As part of the 22 credits required for graduation, students must also work part-time and/or complete community service hours. Prospective students submit applications and are selected for admission based on their willingness to make changes, abide by established student and parent contracts and demonstrate a desire to obtain a high school diploma. Once accepted into the program, a student must complete two successful marking periods at ALTA before a request to transfer to Southington High School will be considered.

Southington High School

Mission Statement

Southington High School students construct knowledge and grow from challenges by asking questions, exploring ideas, conducting investigations, producing work, and evaluating results. Students make deliberate choices in their effort to pursue passions and balance individual interests with the welfare of others to improve quality of life.

Learner Expectations

Academic Expectations

1. Apply knowledge to address new and existing challenges
2. Access, interpret, and evaluate information and ideas from a variety of sources
3. Work independently and collaboratively to produce, evaluate, and improve work
4. Communicate effectively based on audience, purpose, and form of expression
5. Draw Connections/develop conclusions based on information

Social Expectation

6. Work cooperatively to promote a positive learning environment

Civic Expectation

7. Demonstrate and understand the role of a responsible citizen

COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS
FOR STUDENT LEARNING

CURRICULUM

INSTRUCTION

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT
LEARNING

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

1

MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

The school's mission statement describes the essence of what the school as a community of learners is seeking to achieve. The expectations for student learning are based on and drawn from the school's mission statement. These expectations are the fundamental goals by which the school continually assesses the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Every component of the school community must focus on enabling all students to achieve the school's expectations for student learning.

1. The mission statement and expectations for student learning shall be developed by the school community and approved and supported by the professional staff, the school board, and any other school-wide governing organization.
2. The school's mission statement shall represent the school community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning.
3. The school shall define school-wide academic, civic, and social learning expectations that:
 - are measurable;
 - reflect the school's mission.

4. For each academic expectation in the mission, the school shall have a targeted level of successful achievement identified in a rubric.
5. The school shall have indicators by which it assesses the school's progress in achieving school-wide civic and social expectations.
6. The mission statement and the school's expectations for student learning shall guide the procedures, policies, and decisions of the school and shall be evident in the culture of the school.
7. The school shall review regularly the mission statement and expectations for student learning using a variety of data to ensure that they reflect student needs, community expectations, the district mission, and state and national standards.

Conclusions

The mission statement and expectations for student learning at Southington High School were developed by the school community and approved by the professional staff and the school board. The mission statement committee consisted of two administrators, a coordinator, a board of education member, a paraprofessional, a world language teacher, a social studies teacher, a gifted and talented teacher, a school counselor, two parents, and two students. This committee's work was revised and modified after review by departments and faculty discussion. On December 18, 2007, the revised mission statement was approved by the faculty of the high school. It was then presented and approved by the board of education on January 10, 2008. For a school the size of Southington High School, however, the committee was relatively small. Thus, the mission and expectations may not be representative of the school community and would benefit from participation by a wider range of stakeholders in the development and revision of the SHS Mission and Expectations for Learning. (self-study, teachers, administrators, board of education, evidence box)

The Southington High School Mission Statement represents the fundamental values and beliefs about student learning of most of the school community. According to the school's self-study, "The school community's core values and beliefs are reflected in lessons that provide opportunities for critical thinking, problem-solving, demonstration of respectful discourse, and independent thinking." All members of the board of education and 88% of teachers indicated that the mission and expectations reflect these values and beliefs. However, only 60.1% of parents agreed that the school's mission statement embodies what the community values and believes about education. Both students and parents are confused about the relationship between the students' grades in courses and the feedback they receive on assignments that are assessed using the school-wide rubrics. This suggests that in some areas, the beliefs and values regarding instruction and assessment are not adequately aligned with the current mission and learner expectations or that the teaching community has not sufficiently used the expectations and rubrics to accustom students and their parents to the formative value of the school-wide rubrics. As a result, the mission and learning expectations is not a driving force for learning and teaching at Southington High School. (teachers, self-study, Endicott survey, students, parents, administrators, board of education)

Southington High School has defined five school-wide academic expectations, one civic expectation, and one social expectation that are measurable and reflect the school's mission. However, many teachers and students feel that the expectations and associated rubrics are not specific enough to provide meaningful feedback for students. The ultimate goal of the school-wide rubrics has yet to be established. Some departmental discussions have begun on the more consistent use of the school-wide rubrics, but systemic policies, discussions about expectations, and calibration exercises for consistent rubric use have not yet taken place. Integration of the school-wide expectations varies by department, teacher, and course. As a result, the Southington High School community does not have a clear or unified plan for demonstrating and measuring student achievement of the academic expectations. It is not clear how the expectations will be made meaningful to students beyond impacting individual course grades throughout their career at SHS. (self-study, teachers, students, parents, administrators)

Southington High School has established a targeted level of successful achievement on each of the school-wide rubrics. However, there is no mechanism or process to ensure that rubrics are understood or used similarly by all staff members. Many students feel that their

scores on school wide rubrics do not provide them with feedback that helps them to improve as learners. As a result, the mission and learning expectations are not an integral part of the learning culture at Southington High School. (students, teachers, student work, parents)

Southington High School does not have indicators by which it assesses the school's progress in achieving its school-wide civic and social expectations for learning. Currently, the school collects data on discipline and attendance to draw conclusions about how students achieve civic and social expectations, but these data are not aggregated in any meaningful way to demonstrate progress of individual students nor the school as a whole in achieving the civic and social expectations. The school has also used a survey to determine how many students are engaged in co-curricular and extra curricular activities, but these data do not reveal what percentage of the student body participates, nor do they indicate which students are not engaged in pursuing their interests outside of school. The school counseling department has been charged with crafting rubrics to measure the civic and social expectations, and both school counselors and the members of the mission committee are struggling to find valid means by which to assess civic and social standards. Apart from the two identified civic and social expectations for learning, the school has adopted a set of behavioral expectations for students. These are displayed prominently in most classrooms and are an integral part of the culture of the school. However, it is not clear how these expectations relate to the mission and expectations, nor does the school have any means of collecting data to demonstrate progress over time. As a result the current social and civic expectations have little impact on teaching and learning in the school community, and they are not relevant to student success. (teachers, self-study, students, administrators, classroom observations)

The school's mission statement and the school's learning expectations are seldom used to guide procedures, policies, and decisions in the school. Occasionally a club is approved because of the students' "effort to pursue passions" as referenced in a portion of the mission statement. According to the Endicott Survey, only 53% of the staff considers the school's mission when making important professional decisions. This may be indicative of the relatively small group involved in the development of the school's mission and expectations for learning. Many teachers believe that decisions at the school are not mission-driven, but most believe that there is the potential to make it so. They feel this is especially true of the school's curriculum. Although they do not believe the curriculum is currently mission-driven, they are optimistic that, as they review the written curriculum for each course, they will be able to adopt a more mission-oriented approach. This optimism stems from a belief that the mission was drafted to align with current teaching and learning beliefs and practices. Because the mission and expectations do not yet clearly guide procedures, policies, and decisions of the school, the mission is not yet an integral part of the culture of the school. (self-study, Endicott Survey, students, teachers, administrators)

Southington High School regularly reviews and updates the mission statement and expectations for student learning. According to the self-study, a team of teachers, students, parents and administrators is assembled to consider revisions to the mission and expectations. The team reviews the previous mission statements, data collected from student surveys, and any pertinent input from the staff to determine any necessary revisions. This process takes place three times during a ten-year period. The mission statement was revised during the school's two-year review in 2002, the five-year review in 2005, and again in 2008. The SHS Mission Team, which included department chairs and teachers, has commented that the school's capacity and willingness to rally behind the mission and expectations has never been

greater. Many teachers and school leaders look forward to revising curriculum and assessments to more closely align with the mission and expectations. Similarly, the SHS Mission Team acknowledges that the social and civic expectations may need to be revised in order to be measurable and to resonate with the student body. It will be important to broaden the participation of stakeholders in the regular reviews in order to ensure that Southington High School truly becomes a mission-driven school. Without a review team that is truly representative of the many stakeholders in this large high school, it will be difficult for the school to become a mission-driven school. (self-study, teachers, leadership)

Commendations

1. The collaborative process used to develop the school's mission and expectations for learning
2. The commitment to on-going review and revision of the school's mission and expectations for learning
3. The wide variety of academic, civic, social services, programs, and clubs that have been designed to give students the opportunity to practice the academic, civic, and social expectations for learning

Recommendations

1. Ensure that the school's core values and beliefs as well as the learning expectations are reviewed by a large, representative group of stakeholders in order to embed them in the culture of the school
2. Develop indicators to measure and report the school's progress in achieving school wide civic and social expectations
3. Create school and departmental policies to ensure that the school's mission, values, and expectations guide and become ingrained in all aspects of the school's culture and operations
4. Ensure that teachers teaching the same course have formal opportunities to integrate school-wide learning expectations and rubrics into their curriculum, evaluate their effectiveness, and ensure that rubrics are implemented similarly and consistently
5. Clarify the relationship between the SHS behavioral expectations and the school's civic and social expectations for learning
6. Ensure that there is a process that makes the civic and social expectations meaningful to students

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

2 CURRICULUM

The curriculum, which includes coursework, co-curricular activities, and other school-approved educational experiences, is the school's formal plan to fulfill its mission statement and expectations for student learning. The curriculum links the school's beliefs, its expectations for student learning, and its instructional practices. The strength of that link is dependent upon the professional staff's commitment to and involvement in a comprehensive, ongoing review of the curriculum.

1. Each curriculum area shall identify those school-wide academic expectations for which it is responsible.
2. The curriculum shall be aligned with the school-wide academic expectations and shall ensure that all students have sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve each of those expectations.
3. The written curriculum shall:
 - prescribe content;
 - integrate relevant school-wide learning expectations;
 - identify course-specific learning goals;
 - suggest instructional strategies;
 - suggest assessment techniques including the use of school-wide rubrics.
4. The curriculum shall engage all students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking as well as provide opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills.
5. The curriculum shall:
 - be appropriately integrated;
 - emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage.
6. The school shall provide opportunities for all students to extend learning beyond the normal course offerings and the school campus.
7. There shall be effective curricular coordination and articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.
8. Instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, staffing levels, and the resources of the library/media center shall be sufficient to allow for the implementation of the curriculum.
9. The professional staff shall be actively involved in the ongoing development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum based on assessments of student performance in achieving the school's academic expectations and course-specific learning goals.
10. The school shall commit sufficient time, financial resources, and personnel to the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum.
11. Professional development activities shall support the development and implementation of the curriculum.

Conclusions

Although each department at Southington High School has identified the academic expectations for which it is responsible, this is not documented in all curricula. The 2009-2010 Program of Studies clearly states these school-wide expectations under each department's heading, and some curriculum maps and unit goals in the written curriculum do show connection to state standards and the learning expectation for which the department accepts responsibility. Few teachers make reference to the academic expectations during lessons, and most students are not able to explain why they are doing the work they have been asked to do or how it was related to the school's mission and expectations for learning. Clearly articulating the academic expectations for which each department is responsible within each curriculum document will help to focus curriculum and instruction at Southington High School remained focused on the school's mission and expectations for learning. (curriculum guides, self-study, student shadowing, classroom observations, meeting with curriculum committee).

Although curriculum documents do not explicitly refer to the academic expectations, courses are implicitly aligned according to the teachers, who believe that they provide sufficient opportunity for students to practice and achieve each of those expectations. For example, the English and social studies departments assign essays and research papers that require students to access, interpret, and evaluate information and ideas from a variety of sources and then to work either independently or collaborative to produce their work. Many departments include effective communication of ideas as part of their curricula. Thus, although the curricula do not explicitly reference the academic expectations, the implicit alignment is there. Southington High School is committed to the Understanding by Design (UbD) curriculum model and is in the process of upgrading curricula to ensure the vertical integration of courses and expectations for students in all schools and levels of academic outcomes. The district has committed to a five-year rotating process of curriculum revision but suspended curriculum work during the self-study process. Following the Understanding by Design process, most curriculum documents identify enduring understandings, essential questions, knowledge, and skills. Some documents also include suggested instructional and assessment strategies. This process started in 2004 and will resume in the fall of 2010 with electives, special-education courses, and the remaining departments that have not had initial incorporation of the Understanding by Design framework. The curriculum addresses the opportunity for many students to experience higher ordered learning with teachers creating classes and objectives that require higher level thinking. However, many of the observed Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 classes were decidedly teacher-oriented with students seated in rows, using worksheets, and receiving individual instruction or provided information in a lecture format with little opportunity for higher order thinking and learning tasks. Some teachers expressed the opinion that students at lower levels are "highly unlikely" to be able to achieve this level of learning, although in other similarly leveled classes students were engaged in meaningful, high level thinking, and there was effective use of differentiated instruction. This inconsistency in curriculum focus and delivery limits the opportunities of some students to practice and achieve the promise of the mission and expectations for learning. (self-study, panel presentation, students, curriculum guides, evidence box, classroom observations)

Most written curricula use the Understanding by Design (UbD) framework. The curriculum maps prescribe content, list essential questions, identify expected performances and course-specific learning goals, and, in some cases, suggested instructional and assessment strategies. Some written curricula exclude relevant school-wide learning expectations, and those departments and courses that have not had their curricula reviewed and updated using the UbD model have several deficiencies in meeting the requirements as set by the curriculum standard. While core courses have been updated using the UbD model, elective courses in all disciplines and required courses in some departments have yet to be completed. Currently, self-contained special education courses have no curriculum guides and, instead, develop plans based on the students IEP and goals defining a level of mastery that is linked to grade-level content. School-wide rubrics to assess the learning expectations laid out in the mission have not been incorporated in many of the course documents provided in support of the curriculum maps of each department. The school and the central office administrators are committed to the UbD model and have a plan to incorporate all departments and courses in the process and to add definitive links to the

learning expectations chosen by each department from those delineated from the mission statement. Although the Endicott Survey undertaken in 2008 indicates that 100% of the board of education and 84% of the faculty believe that school-wide academic expectations are represented in the curriculum, there is no specific reference in the curriculum documents to the academic expectations for learning, leaving instructional application to the discretion of the individual teachers. Although 70% of students felt they are exposed to critical thinking exercises only half thought they are offered connections of school learning with relevant examples outside of school. Some teachers make those connections explicit during instruction. For example, the business department has an advertising company that sells signage on high school athletic fields and the vocational-agriculture department runs a floriculture program that sells flowers and plants grown by the students to the public. Time and the significant engagement shown by administrators and teachers will be required to provide students and parents with a fully developed curriculum. (Endicott Survey, teachers, administrators, students, curriculum guides, self-study, parents)

The curriculum engages many students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking, but students in some academic levels are not engaged in these learning skills. By adopting the UbD curriculum model that includes enduring understandings and essential questions, SHS seeks to create the higher order thinking environment more universally in all classrooms. Teachers can point out projects and differentiated learning activities that require students to apply, analyze, synthesize, and draw conclusions within and among all curriculum areas. Although much of this has been included in curriculum documents, implementation is still uneven, with more level 3 and 4 students usually exposed to this environment but many level 1 and 2 classrooms arranged with students sitting in rows, seldom engaged in inquiry and problem-solving by students themselves. These students copy from teacher-generated notes or textbooks, or fill out worksheets. In addition, level 1 and 2 science courses do not have scheduled labs limiting inquiry, a most basic element of the scientific method, and problem-solving during the regular class period. These inequities must be addressed through curriculum revision, professional development, school policy and leadership to ensure that all students are engaged in inquiry, problem-solving, and high order thinking. (student shadowing, observations, teachers, curriculum documents, students)

Southington High School offers many opportunities for students to practice authentic application of knowledge. For example, the technology education department offers a series of courses such as Project Lead the Way where students are introduced to authentic application of learned engineering concepts. The Corner Cafe provides an opportunity for students in the family and consumer sciences and business departments to showcase what they have studied in the classroom. However, staff members, students, and parents disagree about the opportunities available for authentic application of knowledge and skills. Only 49% of students and 51% of parent respondents believe students are asked to apply classroom learning to life outside of school, whereas 92% of faculty respondents believes they provide many opportunities for authentic learning. While SHS provides some practical opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills, not all students share in these experiences, thereby limiting their achievement of this aspect of the school's mission and expectations for learning. (student shadowing, Endicott Survey, observations, self-study, student work, teachers, parents)

The SHS curriculum is appropriately integrated within disciplines and provides some opportunities for integration among academic areas. The English curriculum develops basic fundamentals of writing an essay in 9th grade to support independent research and analytical essay writing in 11th and 12th grades. Additionally, both the United States History and the second half of World History courses are aligned to cover similar time periods by emphasizing topics such as World War I on both a national and world level. There are some examples of integrated curriculum among academic areas. For example, a world history teacher collaborates with a business teacher about a project writing a dictator's resumé. While students learn about the dictators in world history, a business teacher instructs them on how to write a proper cover letter and resume. Additionally, the technology education department performs maintenance on farm equipment used in the vocational agriculture department. The vocational agriculture department also farm-raises tilapia that the family and consumer sciences department will later prepare in their culinary courses. However, while many of these opportunities are

planned informally and teacher-generated, little formal collaboration takes place. There are no formal activities to promote integration and interdisciplinary skills across the disciplines, such as writing or reading. (curriculum documents, student work, self-study, classroom observations, students, teachers)

To promote depth of understanding, essential questions and enduring understandings are included in the majority of the written curricula. These components encourage students to engage in critical thinking and to make real-world connections to what they are learning. By utilizing the UbD model, Southington High School has begun to make a commitment to designing curriculum that intentionally emphasizes depth of understanding. However, only some teachers have implemented these components of their written units in their classrooms. For example, the “Baby Think it Over” unit in the early childhood department provides students with the opportunity to experience child care in a real life scenario. The advanced accounting course creates and maintains the ledger for an advertising sales project where the students in the marketing course sell signs for the SHS athletic fields. These examples demonstrate in-depth application of various concepts. Some teachers cite the lack of time provided by the current schedule as a deterrent to emphasizing depth of understanding in their approach to implementing curriculum. Inconsistencies with delivery of the written curriculum may result in a lack of deep understanding of essential concepts by students even though such opportunities are included in the curricula. (curriculum guides, self study, teachers, students, observations)

Southington High School provides many opportunities for all students to extend learning beyond the normal course offering and the school campus. In fact, since the high school is so large, there is a myriad of choices to meet student interests and needs. In addition to acquiring college credit via Early College Experience UConn and AP courses, SHS has partnerships with UConn, Wesleyan University, St. Joseph College, and the local community colleges such as Naugatuck Valley and Tunxis. Students also have access to the Greater Hartford Academy for Arts and the Greater Hartford Academy for Mathematics and Science magnet schools. Vocationally, all students can experience many career focused classes and organizations. Such extensive and impressive programs include, but are certainly not limited to, an amazing floriculture program that serves the community, a veterinarian science clinic, a taxidermy program, a repair shop that maintains the vo-ag farm equipment, a fish farm, the co-operated bank, and the Corner Café. While many activities do not have curricula per se, there are extensive opportunities given to at least 35 different civic, social, academic, and culture clubs. With over 200 students involved in the performing arts programs to the Best Buddies Program that unites regular education student with students with disabilities to the well supported FFA activities, SHS offers students a variety of career and off-campus opportunities as well as integrating and expanding co- and extra-curricular activities with community partnerships. (self study, teachers, students, observations)

The curricular coordination and articulation between and among academic areas and with the sending schools is inadequate for a school as large as Southington High School. Curriculum is reviewed and aligned with school’s expectations on a five-year revision cycle, with on average three subject areas presenting their newly revised curriculum to the Board of education each year. Instructional leaders and teachers meet four times a year ostensibly to work on the curriculum. However, both teachers and supervisors express frustration over these meetings since more immediate concerns such as the need to create common assessments and most recently the NEASC process itself have consumed the time that should have been dedicated to curriculum writing. Currently, the curriculum is aligned more with a K-8 and 9-12 focus, rather than a comprehensive, systems oriented K-12 alignment. Unlike overlap for the purpose of reinforcing major concepts for the CAPT, students report considerable redundancy in course content. For example, 9th graders describe a significant overlap in the content of the 8th grade United States History course and the 9th grade Civics class and the 10th grade U. S. History course. Math and science teachers further confirm that there is a lack of communication between the middle school teachers and teachers of sophomores, juniors, and seniors. The UbD model that has been used to realign the curriculum has greatly aided in articulation of a sequenced curriculum at the high school. This articulation is further corroborated by the frequent use of common unit assessments as well as midterm and final exams. The lack of curricular articulation and alignment between the high school and the sending schools may result in gaps in student knowledge and unnecessary repetition of some material.

(self-study, teachers, students, observations)

Instructional materials, equipment, supplies, facilities, and resources of the library media center are insufficient in their support of curriculum and are notably inadequate in several areas, but staffing levels in most courses are sufficient. The greatest areas of deficiency include textbooks, supplies, and the resources of the library media center. The age, condition and copyright dates of books are a recurring complaint of teachers, parents and students. A consistent 50% of all stakeholders completing the Endicott Survey agree on the problems caused by the condition of textbooks, many of which are falling apart and are outdated by at least ten years. Many teachers and most departments agree that these technology and equipment are insufficient to support the curriculum. Even though outside grants have come to the short-term technological aid of SHS, long-term support is non-existent. Furthermore, student interviews and observation confirm the need not only for more technology, such as mounted projectors and dedicated SMARTBoards, but for new computers to replace the outdated units and those that operate at a glacial pace. Finally, the greatest impediment to curricular and technological growth is the lack of resources in the library media center. While the staff generally agrees that the library has an adequate number of web-based databases, there is agreement that the library is underutilized by students, who themselves indicate that they use the library less than 25% of the time. Staffing levels, however, are highly supportive of the delivery of curriculum. Most observed classes had 18 – 22 students, with a few over 25 and a few under 15. However, even with reasonable class sizes, limited and decreasing instructional materials, supplies, library, and technological resources may impede delivery of the curriculum, limiting the ability of students to achieve the mission and expectations for learning. (self study, teachers, students, observations)

The professional staff is involved in the ongoing development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum, but the school's current process and schedule does not provide sufficient time for teachers to communicate and share student data in making curricular revisions. According to the self-study, 86% of staff respondents believes they are involved in the curriculum process, yet only 28% believe they receive sufficient time to complete the development, evaluation, and revision. In 2008-2009, teachers piloted the school-wide rubrics, designed by faculty representatives in all departments and submitted their reflections on the rubrics, leading to a revision process in the 2009-2010 school year. In addition, teachers are required to collaborate on curriculum analysis and revision for two hours each month. Currently, specific departments use data to inform revision of the curriculum, but not all departments are utilizing data to inform revision of the curriculum at this time. The English department uses data from the CAPT, PSAT, and CMT to cite trends on student performance and revise curriculum. The math department has examined CAPT data from 2001 to 2005 that showed performance gaps in mathematics, which led to a revised curriculum for transitional and practical math to include the specific skills needed on the mathematics CAPT. After giving common midterm examinations, some departments at SHS ran a computerized report analyzing student performance on common questions and then used this data to revise curriculum. Currently, to monitor the use of data to assess the achievement of the school's academic expectations, departments are responsible for recording individual student progress through PowerSchool toward meeting the academic expectation for which their department has assumed responsibility. Students and parents have received this "learner expectation report" just once since it has been implemented, but SHS has not yet used the data on the school's academic expectations to inform curriculum revision. Thus, the professional staff is involved with some ongoing curriculum development and the beginning stages of data collection, but insufficient time has resulted in little revision and evaluation of the current curriculum, with the result that students are not being served using a current and viable curriculum. (teachers, self study, parents, standards committee)

The school does not commit sufficient time, financial resources, and personnel to the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum. The school follows a five-year curriculum cycle. "Years one and two are research and development, year three is implementation; year four is monitoring, and year five is evaluating results." Sometimes the district provides funding for teachers to work on curricula over the summer. Even though twenty hours a year is dedicated to curriculum writing, this time has often been superseded by more pressing matters such as "analyzing CAPT data and assessing

student work.” While these data inform the curriculum revision process, the analysis of test scores and student work are time consuming, leaving little time for actual curriculum revision. Although the district’s assistant superintendent oversees curricular matters and does provide adequate financial resources and time for the evaluation of curriculum, there is limited time dedicated to the development and revision of curriculum. (self-study, teachers, students, observations)

For the past five years, most of the professional development activities in Southington High School have supported the development and implementation of the curriculum. Indeed, the amount of allotted time on the dates of these activities indicates that intensive time was spent on curricular matters. For example, all reports indicated that curricular meetings were between three to six hours in length. Such activities include workshops on Understanding by Design, curriculum development, and curriculum adjustments. However, there has been a disparity between the intentions of these meetings and what was actually done. While some professional development has supported the development and implementation of the curriculum, time and resources have been limited by other priorities and circumstances. Thus, it is important for the district to commit and focus sufficient professional development time to the development, support, and implementation of the UbD curriculum. (self-study, teachers, students, observations)

Commendations

1. The large variety of opportunities and rewarding programs beyond the walls of the school, that are designed to meet the needs and interests of all students
2. The school-wide dedication to the Understanding by Design process

Recommendations

1. Ensure adequate time and resources for the development and revision of curriculum that is specifically connected to the school’s learner expectations
2. Upgrade the resources of the library media center and integrate these resources into the curriculum
3. Ensure sufficient materials, such as textbooks and access to online resources to enhance the delivery of a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all students
4. Increase the use of data in all departments and from various sources to create informed revision of the curriculum
5. Develop and implement a plan for using school-wide rubric assessments to inform curriculum revision
6. Provide professional development in the delivery of curriculum that ensures that all students are engaged in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking.
7. Ensure that all students experience authentic assessment of learning
8. Establish effective curricular alignment with the sending school

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

3 INSTRUCTION

The quality of instruction in a school is the single most important factor affecting the quality of student learning, the achievement of expectations for student learning, the delivery of the curriculum, and the assessment of student progress. Instructional practices must be grounded in the school's mission and expectations for student learning, supported by research in best practice, and refined and improved based on identified student needs. Teachers are expected to be reflective about their instructional strategies and to collaborate with their colleagues about instruction and student learning.

1. Instructional strategies shall be consistent with the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning.
2. Instructional strategies shall:
 - personalize instruction;
 - make connections across disciplines;
 - engage students as active learners;
 - engage students as self-directed learners;
 - involve all students in higher order thinking to promote depth of understanding;
 - provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge or skills;
 - promote student self-assessment and self-reflection.
3. Teachers shall use feedback from a variety of sources including other teachers, students, supervisors, and parents as a means of improving instruction.
4. Teachers shall be expert in their content area, knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches, and reflective about their own practices.
5. Discussion of instructional strategies shall be a significant part of the professional culture of the school.
6. Technology shall be integrated into and supportive of teaching and learning.
7. The school's professional development program shall be guided by identified instructional needs and shall provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies.
8. Teacher supervision and evaluation processes shall be used to improve instruction for the purposes of enhancing student learning and meeting student needs.

Conclusions

Some teachers at Southington High School use instructional strategies that are consistent with the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning. The Understanding by Design curriculum model fosters student-centered instruction that empowers students to ask questions, explore ideas, conduct investigations, and evaluate results. In some classrooms, this approach to instruction is clear and effective. In level 3 and 4 science classes, for example, students conduct lab experiments that promote inquiry-based learning. In some English classes students learn in a Socratic seminar approach. However, in many classes students remain seated in rows, copying notes, completing worksheets, and listening to teacher-directed lessons. As a result, not all students benefit from a strong repertoire of instructional strategies that engage them in the achievement of the school's mission and expectations for learning. (students, observations, parents, teachers, student shadowing)

Some Southington High School teachers use instructional strategies that personalize instruction, make connections across the disciplines, engage learners as active learners, involve students in higher order thinking to promote depth of understanding, provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge or skills, and promote opportunities for student self-assessment and self-reflection. In some classes students are engaged in working at their own speed with personalized attention and prompts from the teacher. In these classrooms, students are also encouraged to engage in self-directed tasks, which afford them the opportunity to apply prior knowledge. English teachers staff a writing lab where students can meet with a faculty member to modify, discuss, and improve their writing. Math teachers address individual questions or reinforce concepts in the math lab. Higher order thinking is expected of the students in many upper level classes but only occasionally expected of students in level 1 and 2 or lower level classes. There are few examples of teachers making connections across the disciplines beyond the expectation that all subjects integrate the skills of reading and writing into their curricula. There is a technical writing course that is co-taught by an English and technology teacher, and the theatre arts course involves instruction by art, English, and music teachers as students produce a play. Teachers are active in ensuring that most students are engaged productively in the tasks at hand. The vocational agriculture, business, marketing, family and consumer sciences departments (DECA Mart, School Store, Corner Cafe, Knightvertising) give all students the opportunity to apply skills learned to real life situations. Although there are examples of varied instructional strategies, not all students at Southington High School are engaged as active, self-directed learners. (student shadowing, observations, student work, students, teachers, parents)

Some teachers at Southington High School use feedback from a variety of sources to improve instruction. However, many students feel that they do not have a role in providing feedback to teachers to improve instruction, and they often turn to their guidance counselors with instructional issues rather than the appropriate teacher because of their perception that feedback is sometimes unwelcome or inappropriate. Some teachers seek feedback from selected students. Teachers note that once they are tenured, they do not receive regular feedback from supervisors, and many report receiving little formal feedback or observation from administrators. Teachers feel that they have sufficient opportunities to get feedback from other teachers if needed, but most teachers do not seek feedback from peers. As a result of having no formal process of providing feedback from other teachers, students, supervisors, and parents, opportunities for instructional improvement are limited. (teachers, students, parents, survey information)

Most teachers at Southington High School are expert in their content areas and reflective about their own practices. However, although teachers have access to articles about current research on effective instructional approaches, not all teachers use them to improve instruction. All general education teachers are teaching within their content areas with full certification, and the majority of the teachers holds advanced degrees (73%). Some teachers read professional journals and articles, and some collaborate regularly informally. Department meetings allow for a dissemination of information between peers and distribution of current articles by department chairs. Many teachers attend workshops at their own initiative in order to remain current in new teaching practices and willingly share what they have learned with their peers. Reflection is carried out more informally with the most recent being an examination of the mid-term examinations within each department. However, without a formal on-going program of professional development on effective instructional practices, instructional improvement will be limited. (self-study, teachers, administrators)

Discussion of instructional strategies is not a significant part of the professional culture of the school. The discussion that does occur is informal. Teachers use time before school, at lunch, and after school to discuss instructional strategies. Time is provided for department, faculty, and curriculum meetings, but teachers who co-teach have difficulty in finding sufficient collaborative planning time. Teachers who wish to create interdisciplinary lessons and projects must discuss cross curricular connections on their own time. The discussion of instructional strategies is limited by the lack of coordinated planning time. As a result of absence of a formal and consistent process to facilitate teacher discussion of instructional strategies, students are limited in their achievement of the school's mission and expectations for learning. (teachers, students, parents, board of education, central office administrators, school leadership team)

Some Southington High School teachers integrate technology readily into their teaching and learning. However, teachers are required to sign up for use of a computer lab as much as two weeks in advance of their planned lesson. Teachers use the available SMARTBoards, Computer Assisted Design programs, and WebQuests effectively with their students. The technology department also utilizes a 3D design printer program. Although some teachers use technology in their classes, a lack of professional development and limited availability of equipment inhibit much of the integration of technology into instruction. (self-study, teachers, students, survey)

The school's professional development program is not guided by identified instructional needs. Teachers who wish to pursue personal professional development to improve their instructional practices are limited by their ability and willingness to use personal time, apply for grants, and/or pay for these opportunities themselves. Teachers indicate they are willing to pay for professional development for themselves but have been denied release time because of insufficient substitute availability. Central office administrators report that teachers are encouraged to shadow other teachers, and many of them do so, but many teachers are unaware of this policy and have not shadowed other teachers. Formal professional development is limited to school-mandated or district-wide time each year. Many teachers voluntarily meet before school, during lunch, and after school to discuss student work and strategies, but there is no formal, structured time for teachers to work together to develop and improve their instructional strategies. Instructional improvement at Southington High School is limited by the lack of focused professional development in the area of instruction and by the lack of structured time for teachers to work together to develop and improve their instructional

strategies. (teachers, students, student shadowing, school leadership team, central office administrators)

The teacher supervision and evaluation process currently in place is not being used to improve instruction at Southington High School. The present document is under revision to improve feedback from supervisory support from the administration. Observations and feedback for non-tenured teachers is more effective than for tenured teachers. Peers are very supportive of each other and offer insight and strategies to each other on an informal basis. Most teachers are very receptive to constructive feedback that will aid them in improving their teaching performance with regard to enhancing student learning and meeting student needs. Therefore, the administrative supervision and evaluation process currently in place does not provide adequate input to ensure that teachers are provided with the tools necessary to improve instructional methods that meet and enhance student-learning needs. (teachers, school leadership team, self-study)

Commendations

1. The vocational and business programs (i.e. agriculture, Corner Cafe, Knightvertising, DECA), which use instructional strategies that provide students the opportunity to apply skills learned to real life situations
2. The commitment of the teachers to make the time to work collaboratively with other teachers before and after school for purposes of improved instructional practice
3. The teachers who pursue learning about best instructional practices on their own

Recommendations

1. Develop and implement a plan to ensure all students are engaging in higher order thinking to promote depth of understanding, provide opportunities to apply knowledge or skills, and to promote self-assessment and reflection
2. Develop and implement a process of providing formal and varied feedback from other teachers, students, supervisors and parents as a method to improve instruction
3. Develop and implement a formal and consistent process for teachers to collaborate and encourage discussion of best teaching practices within and across disciplines
4. Develop and implement a planned professional development relevant to all teachers for the purpose of increasing the repertoire of instructional strategies of all teachers
5. Provide appropriate professional development and materials to increase the integration of technology across the curriculum
6. Complete the revision of the teacher evaluation and professional growth plan and use it to improve instruction of all teachers and to enhance student learning

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

4

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Its purpose is to inform students regarding their learning progress and teachers regarding ways to adjust the curriculum and instruction to respond effectively to the learning needs of students. Further, it communicates to the school community the progress of students in achieving the school's expectations for student learning and course-specific learning goals. Assessment results must be continually discussed to improve curriculum and instruction.

1. The school shall have a process to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations in the mission based on school-wide rubrics.
2. The school's professional staff shall use data to assess the success of the school in achieving its civic and social expectations.
3. For each learning activity teachers shall clarify to students the relevant school-wide academic expectations and course-specific learning goals that will be assessed.
4. Teachers shall base classroom assessment of student learning on school-wide and course-specific rubrics.
5. Teachers shall use varied assessment strategies to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies and to assess student growth over time.
6. Teachers shall meet collaboratively to discuss and share student work and the results of student assessments for the purposes of revising the curriculum and improving instructional strategies.
7. The school's professional development program shall provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies.
8. The school's professional staff shall communicate:
 - individual student progress in achieving school-wide academic expectations to students and their families;
 - the school's progress achieving all school-wide expectations to the school community.

Conclusions

Southington High School has a process to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations in the mission based on school-wide rubrics. The rubrics were developed in 2007 and adopted by the faculty in September of 2008. However, the majority of the teachers now believes the rubrics need to be revised to measure student success effectively. There are also many department and course-specific rubrics that have been developed and implemented. The connection between the school-wide rubrics and course-specific rubrics is not always clearly defined resulting in confusion and a lack of connection for the students between expectations and assessment in part because the school-wide rubrics are not being used to help students understand what they need to do to achieve the school's academic expectations. (self-study, teachers, students)

Southington High School currently does not use data to assess the success of the school in achieving its civic and social expectations. A NEASC assessment committee surveyed the students regarding clubs, sports, and community service hours, but the results included only 56% of the student body. Teachers and administrators have discussed using PowerSchool or Naviance to collect this data, but there is no formal data collection process currently in place. While many students do participate in social and civic projects including Bread for Life, Habitat for Humanity, United Way, Southington Drug Task Force, Calendar House, animal shelters, food and book drives, and senior citizen centers, there is no current systematic data collection process to assess the success of the school in achieving its civic and social expectations. Without supporting data, it is impossible to substantiate that all Southington students "make deliberate choices and balance individual interests with the welfare of others to improve quality of life". Without a clearly defined method of collecting data to assess the success of the school in achieving its civic and social expectations, the school has no way of ensuring that each student meets these expectations and no way to communicate progress to students, parents, and the community. (self-study, teachers, self-study)

Some teachers clarify to students the relevant school-wide academic expectations and course-specific learning goals that will be assessed for each learning activity. However, this practice is more prevalent in level 4 courses than the lower levels; it is rarely observed in level 1 courses. For example, in a level 4 English class, students are given a course-specific rubric which clearly identifies four objectives for the assignment (a composition and oral presentation) and quantifies what expectations are required to achieve results designated inadequate, weak, proficient, or excellent. The rubric is explained and the students are given an opportunity to evaluate each other using the rubric before the teacher uses the rubric to grade the assignment. However, this practice does not occur in all classes, and is more prevalent in level 3 and 4 classes. Thus, the use of rubrics is inconsistent from level to level, making it difficult for students to understand the academic expectations for learning and how the work they do is connected to the mission and expectations for learning. (self-study, students, observations)

Many teachers base classroom assessment of student learning on course-specific rubrics and some school-wide rubrics. Teachers use course-specific rubrics often, but the connection to school-wide rubrics is not specified, often resulting in student confusion. School-wide rubrics are rarely used by the faculty for individual assignments, and many teachers report that they are not confident using school-wide rubrics. Thus professional development is necessary as well as opportunities for collegial discussion. Without a systematic use of the school-wide rubrics it will be difficult to measure student progress toward meeting the mission and expectations for

learning, and students will have difficulty understanding the academic expectations for learning. (self-study, students, teachers, observations)

Southington High School consistently uses varied assessment strategies to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies. According to the Endicott Study, 60% of faculty members reports using four to six different types of assessment over the course of a school year. Types of assessment observed included: an essay asking students to synthesize a coherent argument based upon two high-level historical articles; a brochure asking students to convince “customers” to become members of their “gym” while properly utilizing specific, practiced, Spanish skill-sets to the best of their ability; and a eulogy written for a deceased rebel, with a focus on thematic links. Some teachers also used portfolio systems in order to measure student growth over an extended period of time. There is not a clearly defined and consistent method to measure student growth in all subject areas, however, so that although individual teachers use a wide variety of engaging assessments, this is not universal and student growth is not consistently measured in every subject area. (Endicott Survey, classroom observations, teachers, student shadowing, students, parents)

Southington High School teachers meet to discuss and share student work and assessments on an informal basis using planning periods, personal time before and after school, lunchtime, and inconsistently during weekly, afterschool meetings. Teachers cite a lack of specific, organized time dedicated solely to focusing on assessment, with 74% of the teachers surveyed on the Endicott Survey stating that the school does not provide adequate scheduled time to collaborate with teachers within their own subject areas, while 63% of teachers agreed that existing collaboration opportunities enabled positive and constructive discussion of assessment and instructional strategy. District administrators acknowledge that this as an area of need and have already begun to set aside summer opportunities for the mathematics and English departments to examine assessment data in order to foster this discussion. However, it is not clear if time has been set aside for other departments within the school. Furthermore, because school-wide rubrics are not yet being used consistently and effectively across all disciplines, teachers are not able to collect data for revision and discussion. The lack of a consistent and efficient use of the school-wide rubrics along with the collection of assessment data and examples of student work inhibits collaborative discussions about student assessment and the instructional changes needed for improved student achievement. (Endicott Survey, district administrators, self-study, teachers)

Southington High School’s professional development program provides four opportunities per year for teachers to collaborate, but this time is dedicated to a wide range of topics such as NEASC accreditation, curriculum development, and UbD. This limited amount of time leads to an inconsistent overall focus on assessment strategies. Many teachers meet informally on their own time in order to discuss assessment, and as a result, they have been able to develop a wide range of successful assessments. Examples of assessment include: group discussion of homework with a focus on understanding of specific Spanish terms; a quiz on clauses; analysis of a thematic poem to draw comparisons between essential questions and a class novel. However, the absence of formally structured, ongoing collaboration time focused on varied assessment strategies does not support the use of data to improve student learning. (district administrators, teachers, self-study, students)

Southington High School’s professional staff communicates individual student progress in meeting school-wide academic expectations to students and their families using a variety of

methods. Through the implementation of Powerschool, a means has been provided for parents to consistently be aware of student academic progress. Some teachers have also utilized Powerschool as a means to provide personalized comments for their students in order to foster dialogue and awareness with parents. Beyond this, parent perception is that, through the two annual parent/teacher conferences, mid-quarter reports, report cards, and individually scheduled conferences, communication is varied and successful. Additionally, through the implementation of the SHS Learner Expectations Reportcard, a specific update on student achievement in terms of the school-wide expectations and mission is being disseminated to the parents. However, this report is still in its infancy, and it is not clear how often this report will be sent out in the future. While Southington High School has a strong system of open dialogue with parents and students, the system of communicating individual student achievement specifically related to the listed academic expectations is not fully developed. Additionally, Southington High School's professional staff communicates the school's progress achieving all school-wide expectations to the school community in a variety of ways. Through creative programs such as the superintendent's bi-weekly "Spotlight on Education" television program (filmed on campus by students), parents and educators alike are able to stay current on student achievement and success. Results from standardized tests are shared with teachers through whole faculty and departmental meetings, and extra-curricular achievement is shared through the school newspaper, newsletter, website, and the two town newspapers. While a process has begun to assess student achievement in terms of the school-wide learner expectations, it is not clear how this information is disseminated to the school community as a whole. Thus, Southington High School uses a variety of media and meetings in order to share information with the school-wide community as well as the town community, but the process for sharing student achievement on the specific academic expectations with the school community is still in the formative stages. (self-study, parents, district administrators, teachers, students)

Commendations

1. Many teachers' commitment to using a wide variety of assessment strategies to meet different learning styles
2. The variety of methods used to communicate student achievement both to students and parents as well as to the school community as a whole

Recommendations

1. Provide specific professional development in the design, implementation, and use of school-wide rubrics as a means of assessing student progress toward the learner expectations
2. Clarify the purposes of course-specific rubrics and school-wide rubrics for students and teachers
3. Create indicators and implement a systematic approach to collect data on student success at achieving the social and civic expectations
4. Provide formal, structured time on a regular basis for teachers to meet collaboratively to discuss and share student work and the results of student assessments for the purposes of revising the curriculum and improving instructional strategies
5. Provide consistent professional development for all teachers focusing on formative assessment
6. Develop and implement a process for charting student growth in every subject area while expanding the use of SHS "Learner Expectation Reportcards" in order to strengthen communication with students, parents, and the community

SUPPORT STANDARDS

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

SUPPORT STANDARD

5

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

The way in which a school organizes learning for students, fosters leadership, and engages its members has a profound effect on teaching and learning. The professional culture of the school must be characterized by thoughtful, reflective, and constructive discourse about decision-making and practices which supports student learning and well-being.

1. The school board and superintendent shall ensure that the principal has sufficient autonomy and decision-making authority to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning.
2. The principal shall provide leadership in the school community by creating and maintaining a shared vision, direction, and focus for student learning.
3. Teachers as well as administrators other than the principal shall provide leadership essential to the improvement of the school.
4. The organization of the school and its educational programs shall promote the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
5. Student grouping patterns shall reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, reflect current research and best practices, and support the achievement of the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
6. The schedule shall be driven by the school's mission and expectations for student learning and shall support the effective implementation of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment
7. Meaningful roles in the decision-making process shall be accorded to students, parents, and all members of the school staff to promote an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership.
8. Each teacher shall have a student load that enables the teacher to meet the learning needs of individual students.
9. There shall be a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult member of the school community in addition to the school guidance counselor who personalizes each student's educational experience, knows the student well, and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning.
10. The professional staff shall collaborate within and across departments in support of learning for all students.
11. All school staff shall be involved in promoting the well-being and learning of students.
12. Student success shall be regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed.
13. The climate of the school shall be safe, positive, respectful, and supportive, resulting in a sense of pride and ownership.
14. The school board shall support the implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning.

Conclusions

The principal of Southington High School has significant autonomy in making important decisions and takes an active role in developing policies that lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning. Teachers, assistant principals, school board members, and parents, agree that the principal has sufficient autonomy, level of trust, and support by her respective constituent groups to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning. The principal has created a “Theory of Action” to focus the school improvement program and ensure that decisions are made in the best interest of students at SHS and to prevent “initiative overload”. The principal is directly involved in the budget process and the implementation of any new curriculum that enhances student learning. However, in light of the current economy, her request for the funding of five new staff members was denied. The principal uses her autonomy and decision-making authority to enhance school improvements at Southington High School. The principal enjoys a significant amount of support from the district leadership, school leadership, faculty, and parents. According to the Endicott Survey, the majority of faculty and staff members at SHS are comfortable bringing their concerns to the principal. She is a principal who lives her mission every single day. Although the principal’s actions indicate that she has a clear vision, teachers express some uncertainty about the specific elements of this vision and how it relates to the mission and expectations for learning. She is described by many constituent groups as always being accessible, always having her door open, and regularly seeking the input of constituents in focusing the community on student learning. Through the modalities of administrative meetings, department chair meetings, principal’s advisory council, board of education, and PTO, the principal is able to share and communicate her vision for student learning and to seek contribution towards attainment of her goals. Her leadership style includes being highly visible and present. Her newsletter, “From the desk of the principal” provides her with an avenue to get her message out to the community. As a result, teachers, students, and parents at SHS support her and have a sense of ownership in their school and the vision set forth by the principal, but have not yet made the school’s learner expectations a significant part of the culture of the school. (self-study, parents, Endicott Survey, board of education, school leadership team, central office administrators)

Teachers as well as administrators other than the principal provide leadership essential to the improvement of the school. In such a large high school, it is advantageous to rely on the collective leadership from the school’s assistant principals, department chairs, and teachers. Each of the five assistant principals has a job description delineating their numerous leadership responsibilities. From administering discipline, supervision and evaluation of teachers, professional development, creation of the master schedule, and the day-to-day operation of the building, the assistant principals in this large school environment are inundated with situational events. Teachers contribute to the school’s improvement by delivering technology instruction to their peers and through their involvement in the curriculum processes. Additionally, the participation of teachers on committees, initiatives, and student-driven activities, illustrate a spirit of collective leadership. Specifically, teachers at SHS coach more than 25 teams and are advisors to more than 50 clubs and activities. The collaborative and shared leadership at SHS enhances and supports school improvement efforts. (community members, self-study, parents, teachers, students, school leadership team)

There are many aspects of the school’s organization and educational programs that promote the Southington High School Mission and Expectations for Student Learning. For

example, the creation of the ninth grade academy has allowed a more controlled transition from the middle school. Ninth grade students have most of their classes in one area of the building, their own cafeteria, and their own support staff and administrators. The ALTA program, an alternative high school located off-site, is a school of choice for students who struggle in a large comprehensive high school setting. There are examples of integrated curriculum throughout the career and technical education department in the diversified occupation areas. Additionally, there are double periods for some classes (courses in automotive, vo-ag, Project Lead the Way, and AP sciences). However, this is not uniform across the board. Corner Café, DECA mart, DECA school store, and preschool/daycare are all examples smaller learning environments created by the school. However, the schedule has been in place for many years and has not been reviewed for opportunities to provide common planning time and other innovative uses of time to enhance learning and teaching. (self-study, teachers, parents, student shadowing, facility tour, survey)

Student grouping patterns do not reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, reflect current research and best practices, or support the achievement of the school's mission and expectations for student learning. There are several courses that do practice heterogeneous grouping (business, technology, and vocational courses), however, most academic and required courses are strictly leveled (advanced placement, level 4, level 3, level 2, and level 1). This leveling practice reduces the opportunity for heterogeneity. Enrollment in required classes, specifically ninth grade civics and eleventh grade US History often see a significant increase in class size. There are approximately 46 co-teaching teams with special education and regular education teachers. A student's schedule may reflect movement between levels based on the student's ability and interests, but, while students in most level 4 and many level 3 classes have opportunities to practice the higher level thinking embraced by the mission, only some students in levels 1 and 2 are given similar opportunities. The levels at Southington High School inhibit the school's ability to achieve the school's mission and expectations for student learning. Thus, the school would benefit from a study of the advantages of greater heterogeneity in student success. (teachers, student shadowing, observations, students. central office administrators)

While the schedule affords students many opportunities to explore their passions, it does not afford opportunities for teachers to collaborate within and across departments in the school. Although the school day was lengthened in 2007 to increase system-wide instructional time, the primary model of an eight-period day has been established for many years. Southington exceeds the state-required hours of instruction in its school schedule/calendar. The rotating letter days allow for the accommodation of physical education, health, science labs and study halls for students. The school has explored block scheduling in the past, building space utilization and concerns about accommodating the Cooperative Work Experience (CWE) students' need for release time derailed the initiative, however, students report that they are usually able to take most or all of their course choices. Teachers report that they have opportunity for intradepartmental collaboration and communication through their department meetings, yet the majority report the desire and need to connect with other disciplines and departments. Interdepartmental interaction takes place on a more informal basis, usually on the teachers' own time. Teachers welcome opportunities for co-teaching interdisciplinary lessons, but there is no formal time set aside in the schedule for teachers to collaborate. The lack of scheduled time for teachers to collaborate inhibits effective implementation of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment. (self-study, teachers, parents, board of education, school leadership team)

Meaningful roles in the decision-making process are accorded to students, parents, and all members of the school staff promoting an atmosphere of participation, responsibility and ownership. At the community and board level, there are numerous opportunities for input. In spite of the self-study report that states only 43% of staff respondents, 35% of student respondents, and 38% of parent respondents feel there is an atmosphere of participation in decision-making, there are many ways for parents, students, and teachers to participate in the decision making process. The principal's advisory council enables parents, students, and teachers a to have a voice in decision-making. Teachers report that they are able to propose initiatives, make recommendations and suggestions, and participate in the decision making process. A fully functioning Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) in addition to the parents who participate on school committees demonstrate an atmosphere of participation on the part of the parents. Similarly, students enjoy partaking in this process through student council activities and student recommendations. All stakeholders are provided with an opportunity to participate in the decision making at SHS, thereby promoting an atmosphere of shared ownership, responsibility, and participation. (self-study, teachers, students, parents, board of education, school leadership team)

Each teacher at Southington High School has a student load that allows the teacher to provide sufficient attention to the needs of individual students, with an average class size of 18. However, there are some cases where the ability of students to change levels during the school year and the constraints imposed by a lack of classroom space has resulted in student-teacher ratios that are disproportionate. Because of favorable class sizes, teachers have the ability to personalize instruction at Southington High School. (student shadowing, teachers, parents, facility tour, self-study)

There is no formal, on-going program at Southington High School through which each student has an adult member of the school's community, in addition to the school counselor, who personalizes each student's educational experience, knows the student well, and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning. SHS faculty members report that they have embarked on an initiative for an advisory program, received SERC consultation, participated in school visitations to see such programs, and prepared a draft for a pilot program. The program has yet to get off the ground. Interviews with the superintendent and assistant superintendent indicate that the need exists, but with the current schedule and school structure, implementation of a functional program has proven difficult. In spite of the absence of a formal program, faculty and staff members believe there is an abundance of opportunities available for students to make connections to adults, whereas students believe that school counselors are extremely busy and have limited time and opportunity to meet with them. Some students have found classroom teachers as their primary contact for connection, but in the words of one student, "the degree of connection is almost random." Without a formal program, the school does not provide an opportunity for each student to connect with an adult member of the school community other than the school counselor. (self-study, teachers, central office administrators, students)

The professional staff has some opportunities to collaborate within departments in support of learning for all students. Teachers report that, through these meetings, they are able to compare and refine instructional techniques and assessments. In addition, they address grading, student concerns, and provide collegial support. This takes place through department meetings that convene once per month. However, there is a strong desire on the part of the

faculty to meet across disciplines and departments, but the only formal opportunity to do so is either before or after school or at a mutually convenient time. Some team teachers are able to meet with their co-teachers, but others have significant difficulty trying to do so. The current schedule also does not allow for common planning time across the board. As a result, the implementation of the school-wide assessment opportunities for collaboration are left to chance. (teachers, self-study, school leadership team)

Nearly all school staff members are involved in promoting the well-being and learning of students. Students interact regularly with a variety of professional and support staff members. Students view the support staff as available, open, and friendly. Students describe counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, paraprofessionals, the school resource officer, and security staff as support personnel in addition to their classroom teachers. For example, many students participate in group sessions with social workers and school psychologists. In addition, the school counseling department offers programs that focus on student development, including portfolios that aid with transition planning. According to the self-study, the Southington School Health Council teaches nutrition, promotes student health, conducts health fairs and ensures the school is in compliance with all required state and federal mandates. Most members of the SHS faculty and staff play a vital role in ensuring the well-being and learning of students. (self-study, school support staff, parents, teachers, students)

Student success is regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed throughout the hallways and public areas at Southington High School. The school recognizes students in a variety of ways. Display cases hold both athletic and academic awards. Departments showcase student work. Artwork is exhibited in the main hallway as students prepare for their annual Art Show presentation. Local newspapers recognize the accomplishments on a regular basis. In addition, the superintendent's "Spotlight on Education" segment is offered for the community on the community access channel. The "Make My Day" award allows teachers from each discipline to recognize exemplary accomplishments. Although some classrooms are devoid of student work, the business/marketing education and world language classrooms proudly display student work. The school newspaper, "Knight News" and *Emblem* publish articles on sports, musicals, FBLA, DECA, FCCLA, the agriculture science and technology program banquet, and other student-driven activities. Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) Scholars are recognized at a special assembly program in their senior year and are given a CAPT honor cord to wear at graduation. The school counseling department displays its "SHS Shining Stars" and Alumni News. Student success is celebrated and acknowledged at board of education meetings, and write-ups are found throughout the school's website. It is clear that student achievement at Southington High School is regularly acknowledged, displayed, and celebrated. (facility tour, panel presentations, observations, self-study, students, parents)

The climate of Southington High School is positive, respectful, and supportive resulting in a sense of pride and ownership. A strong sense of pride is apparent in the school community according to the parent panel meeting, murals created by class groups, and the many students dressed daily in SHS attire. Many parents were proud to add that they have grown up in Southington and attended SHS. In spite of a large school population of students and staff, the building does not have a feeling of being crowded or cramped. Over 2000 students flow throughout the hallways calmly and quietly. One board of education member commented, "Southington is a place people come back to, to raise their children." Three building security personnel promote facility safety for faculty and students, along with the school resource officer. Classroom doors are locked and are not opened without teacher approval as a means of

promoting a sense of safety and security is this very large school. Student learning expectations, code of conduct, and behavioral expectations are displayed in all classrooms as well as included in the student and teacher handbooks. According to the self-study, 60% of students, 92% of staff members, and 83% of parents surveyed believe that the school is a safe place. Some students feel insecure because of the size of the school and because there are instances where students have engaged in fights or other serious and intimidating behaviors. However, new policies implemented by the new superintendent and board of education have been proactive in addressing disciplinary concerns. As a result, the overall school climate has improved and is indicative of the strong sense of pride and ownership felt by the entire school community. (students, parents, observations, board of education, school support staff, central office administrators, school leadership team, panel presentation)

The school board is very supportive of the principal's leadership role and responsibility in the implementation of the school's mission. Board of education members participated in the writing of the school's mission statement and also participate on a curriculum and instruction committee with an increased emphasis on rigor, passion, and balance. The school board supports individualized student learning by prioritizing budget needs to align with identified goals. The board meets with the Southington Board of Finance and Town Council to advocate for the budgetary needs of all of the schools in the district, referring to Southington High School as "our shining star". Strong pride and ownership of the school's mission results in strong board of education support of the mission and expectations for student learning. (board of education, central office administrators, school leadership team, teachers, self-study)

Commendations

1. The principal's autonomy in the operation of the school
2. The sense of pride exhibited by all school and community members
3. The variety and types of student work that are regularly displayed and celebrated
4. The board of education's pride and ownership in the school and strong support for the mission and expectations for student learning
5. Faculty members' contributions to student well-being and their design of an advisory program

Recommendations

1. Develop and implement a formal program through which each student has an adult member of the school community in addition to the school counselor who personalizes each student's educational experience, knows the student well, and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning
2. Review and revise student grouping practices to reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, reflect current research and best practices, and support the achievement of the school's mission and expectations for student learning
3. Ensure that there is adequate time for formal collaboration to support the effective implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment

SUPPORT STANDARD

6

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Student learning and well-being are dependent upon adequate and appropriate support programs and services. The school is responsible for providing an effective range of integrated resources to enhance and improve student learning and well-being and to support the school's mission and expectations.

All Student Support Services

1. The school's student support services shall be consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
2. The school shall allocate resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's expectations for student learning.
3. Student support personnel shall enhance student learning by interacting and working cooperatively with professional and other staff and by utilizing community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students.
4. All student support services shall be regularly evaluated and revised to support improved student learning.
5. There shall be a system for effective and ongoing communication with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel, designed to keep them informed about the types of available student support services and identified student needs.

6. Student records, including health and immunization records, shall be maintained in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal and state law.
7. There shall be sufficient certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide effective counseling, health, special education, and library media services.

Guidance Services

8. The school shall provide a full range of comprehensive guidance services, including:
 - individual and group meetings with counseling personnel;
 - personal, career, and college counseling;
 - student course selection assistance;
 - collaborative outreach to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers;
 - appropriate support in the delivery of special education services for students.

Health Services

9. The school's health services shall provide:
 - preventive health services and direct intervention services;
 - appropriate referrals;
 - mandated services;
 - emergency response mechanisms;
 - ongoing student health assessments.

SUPPORT STANDARD

6

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Library Information Services

10. The library/information services program and materials shall be fully integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program.
11. Library/information services personnel shall be knowledgeable about the curriculum and support its implementation.
12. A wide range of materials, technologies, and other library/information services that are responsive to the school's student population shall be available to students and faculty and utilized to improve teaching and learning.
13. Students, faculty, and support staff shall have regular and frequent access to library/information services, facilities, and programs as an integral part of their educational experience before, during, and after the school day.
14. The library/information services program shall foster independent inquiry by enabling students and faculty to use various school and community information resources and technologies.
15. Policies shall be in place for the selection and removal of information resources and the use of technologies and the Internet.

Special Education Services

16. The school shall provide special education services related to the identification, monitoring, and referral of students in accordance with local, state, and federal laws.

Conclusions

All Student Support Services

Southington High Schools' student support services are consistent with the school's mission and expectations for learning. At SHS, students are encouraged to make deliberate choices as they pursue their interests while always being cognizant of the welfare of others. Health services at SHS are not only focused on prevention and healthy choices but are concerned with the social and emotional well-being of all Southington students. Special education services support students through team taught classes, inclusion, academic support, transitional activities, and the implementation of the individual educational plans (IEPs). School counselors support student academic and personal growth with lessons such as transitioning from the middle schools, bullying prevention, preparing for mid-year exams, and testing for career interests. The programs assist and support students throughout the four years as they develop decision-making and problem-solving skills and plan for the future. The library media center staff support the school's mission and expectations for learners through the teaching of research skills necessary to pursue individual and academic interests. Southington High School provides a wide range of support services that support student learning and achievement of the mission statement. (self-study, teachers, administrators)

Southington High School has allocated resources to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve academic success. Each student is provided a program of studies booklet which describes in detail the variety of classes ranging from special education to advanced placement and other program options such as: alternative education (ALTA), English Language Learners (ELL), Project Lead the Way, Project Discover, Early College Experience (ECE) and Agriculture Science and Technology. Housed off-site, Southington High School's ALTA program is a well-designed alternative for approximately 50 students who might not be successful at SHS. The program provides classes in four academic areas – English, math, science, and social studies--physical education, art, computers, and life skills. The program, for the first time, has a full-time administrator to supervise and evaluate the staff and programs. A full-time counselor also supports the students in ALTA. The students uniformly praise the classes, teachers, and options they receive. The staff members are very positive in their approach to these non-traditional students. ALTA has an almost 100% success for graduation rate, and a number of their students are planning to pursue post high school educational opportunities. Successful students may apply to return to SHS, but most do not. ALTA students who meet all graduation requirements receive a Southington High School diploma. SHS also provides programs for learners with special needs through academic support classes, team-taught classes, and inclusion practices. Students receive additional support from speech and language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, social workers, and psychologists. School-to-career programs are offered to special education students through the Student Transition and Academic Resource for Success (STARS) program, job shadows, supermarket careers, and the technology education department's Pathways program. The school provides programs to ensure that all students at SHS an equal opportunity to achieve the school's expectations for learning. (self-study, teachers, students, observations)

Student support personnel enhance student learning by interacting and working cooperatively with professional and other staff members and by utilizing community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students. Nurses are an integral part of the school team and communicate throughout the day with other school staff members, physicians, and parents in an attempt to help students thrive in school. Although co-teaching partners do not have specified periods to plan, special education teachers meet on a regular basis with school counselors, administrators, social workers, regular education teachers, the school resource officer, nurses, and school psychologists. School counselors collaborate with teachers, support services staff members, and various community organizations to support each student. The library media specialists work with teachers to support research and collaborate whenever possible. Thus, student support services enhance student learning by meeting the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students at Southington High School. (evidence box, teachers, observations)

Student support services are regularly evaluated and revised to support improved student learning. Current health policies and procedures include the recommendations from the Southington Public School Board and School Health Policies and Procedures, State of Connecticut Department of Public Health and Department of Education regulations, Southington Health Department, and Southington Board of Education Medical Director. Feedback from students, parents, teachers, and administrators is reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. Appropriate changes are made with regard to current practice, programs, and policy if deemed necessary. The coordinator of special education assigned to the high school meets regularly with the district's senior coordinator of special education and all district special education administrators to review service delivery and make changes and improvements. A special education coordinator conducts review of each special educator's caseload to determine compliance with the law regarding IEPs, service delivery, and evaluations. Professional staff members are kept aware of new regulations via monthly staff meetings by department and district administrators. School counselors hold weekly counseling department meetings to evaluate current programs and activities. Evaluation data is collected by surveying participants (parents/students) immediately following most programs and activities. Revisions are made based upon survey results. Programs are improved and adjusted based on feedback. The library's print collection is evaluated using Follett software, and online resources are evaluated by staff members. Library media specialists submit annual reports to the assistant principal. Evaluation information is used to establish goals for budgetary and program improvement purposes. All of these activities ensure that support services are evaluated and revised to support student learning within the constraints of the budget. (evidence box, teachers, observations)

Southington High School communicates with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel through a variety of media: the Internet, television, telephone, and printed materials. New programs are being implemented during the 2009-2010 school year to increase interactive parent/guardian communication using *PowerSchool* and *Naviance*. Additionally, the counseling link on the school website features the many activities and publications of the counseling department. The program of studies, information on course registration, Junior Post High School Planning Guide, senior year planning activities, a listing of the schools and colleges visiting the high school are all posted on the website routinely. A periodic newsletter is also posted informing the community of all events in the counseling department. It is not clear how the other members of the school support services (social workers, psychologists, nurses, and

library media personnel) communicate regularly with the community, however. Printed materials are available in the offices of these staff members, but a more formal method of ongoing communication was not evident. The implementation of the Naviance system this year will eventually allow e-mail blasts to all students and parents/guardians as well as school staff members. This will more effectively and efficiently keep open communications with all community members, thus supporting improved learning for all students. The additional implementation of *PowerSchool* this year has allowed for immediate, live feedback on assignments, assessments, grades, attendance, and biographical information for all students to the faculty and all parents/guardians, and students. Despite all of these efforts, the self-study survey indicated a need for ongoing communication among staff members regarding the availability of services offered at SHS: some faculty members do not believe they are fully informed of the department's activities. As a result, the level of communication between the school resources staff members and all families as well as faculty members may not be consistent or sufficient, and some parents and students may not be informed of all programs and services offered. Further, some community and staff members may not have a thorough understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and programs of the departments. (Endicott Survey, self-study, teachers, students, parents)

Student records, including health and immunization records, shall be maintained in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal and state law. For all current students, records are kept in file cabinets in a locked room with daily access for school counselors, administrators, and teachers in need of working with records. Electronic records are password-protected and are kept by the technology department. For graduated and other "former" students, records are kept in file cabinets in locked rooms. Some older records are kept on microfiche in a locked room. Current student medical records, which include immunization records, physical exams, and emergency contact information are alphabetically stored and locked in filing cabinets located in the nurse's office. Additionally, certain information, not limited to emergency information and medication, is also available within the Power School program, which is password-protected. Former student medical records are secured in a separate locked room. These files are kept for fifty years after the student has graduated and/or left school. Special education records are kept in locked file cabinets in the special education office and maintained in a confidential and secure manner. Non-enrolled and graduate students' records are maintained in a locked room. At the beginning of each school year, all regular education teachers receive, in a secure, confidentially marked envelope, copies of their students' IEPs in order to comply with federal and state guidelines. These copies may not always be secured within the classroom. IEP, SAT, and 504 records are also stored in locked cabinets. While complete records are consistently secured in accordance to Connecticut state law, copies distributed to teaching staff for compliance to student IEPs may not be secured within the individual classrooms. As a result, the security of many records cannot be guaranteed at all times. The confidentiality of these record copies then becomes the responsibility of the classroom teachers. Locked rooms are adequate but not as secure as locked cabinets. Many of the cabinets in individual counselor's offices also do not lock. Also, all records are not stored in fire proof cabinets as required by law. Therefore, the security of the counselors' confidential notes and records cannot be guaranteed. (self-study, teachers, counselors, observations, school support staff)

There are sufficient certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide effective health and special education services for the students at Southington High School. However, there are concerns about the staffing numbers for counseling and library media services. School

counselors currently have caseloads ranging from 210–245 students, but the school resources personnel expressed concerns that increasing enrollments may result in the counseling services' programs not being adequately delivered to all students. The school resources staff indicates that the increasing social and emotional demands on today's students, the significant increase in crisis situations, the demands of post high school planning (especially college admissions), the increase in the number of 504 and special education students, all contribute to a reduction of available time to ensure all students are receiving appropriate services from counselors, social workers, and psychologists. Students report that they do not get to see a counselor more than once or twice a year unless they initiate the appointment. School counselors do not work beyond the school year, inhibiting scheduling and working with students who are new to the district. The staffing of the library media center consists of one full time library media specialist, two part-time clerks, and the audio visual department chair who is assigned to the library media center for two to three periods a day. This staffing arrangement provides one certified staff member to be in the library at any given time to assist students with their assignments and conduct classes. The clerks are non-certified, and one does not have prior library training. While Southington High School meets the guidelines for support services personnel, some students may not receive services in a timely manner because of increasing enrollments and the lack of an extended year for counselors. (self-study, Endicott Survey, teachers, counselors, parents, central office administrators, school support staff, students)

Counseling Services

The Southington Public Schools' comprehensive school counseling program is designed to address the developmental needs of all students and is modeled after the Connecticut Comprehensive School Counseling Program. School counseling department goals are aligned with the overall SHS goal each year. For example, the 2007-2008 goal was to improve standardized test scores. In response to this need, the school counseling department added new lessons about the importance of the PSAT, computer training on student access to its free SAT Study Guide, the school-wide "SAT Question of the Day" contest, and enhanced parent communication about using PSAT resources to improve future test scores. The individual planning component of the counseling program involves meeting with students individually at least once per year. These meetings are generally held in the spring, with counselors discussing course selection, grades, and college/career goals. Together, the counselor and student complete a transition portfolio unique to that student. The transition portfolio serves as an individual record of student planning, academic goals, post-secondary exploration, and personality style identification during the four years of high school. The transition portfolio is maintained and updated by the school counselor and passed onto the student at the end of his or her senior year. This extensive data gathering assures that every student is supported throughout their four years at SHS. Future plans call for this portfolio to be incorporated into an electronic portfolio – possibly in the *Naviance* system. The SHS school resources staff extensively uses the services of the Southington Youth Services Bureau. The agency provides direct services in the school in cooperation with staff members. It also accepts referrals for out-of-school support and coordinates a number of community activities for students and families. SHS has developed a Ninth Grade Academy in response to concerns about eighth to ninth grade transition to such a large high school. The current counselor configuration of student assignments includes two counselors dedicated to the needs of ninth grade students exclusively. They present developmental counseling lessons in large group settings (100 to 150 students) during lunch periods, focusing on topics relevant to freshman students. These lessons include, but are not limited to the following: transition to high school, understanding

credits/graduation requirements, study skills, reading and understanding a report card, GPA, class rank, exam preparation, bullying policies, and the importance of standardized testing (including CAPT). These lessons begin in December of grade eight and continue through the end of grade nine. Parallel programs for parents are offered in the evening when appropriate. All lessons are available on the Ninth Grade Academy website for student and parent access. The large groups do not present an ideal way to present developmental lessons. Although it is difficult to personalize the lessons or to provide valuable feedback to all students, the Ninth Grade Academy has many successful aspects: higher retention/promotion rates, closer proximity of teachers for consultation and collaboration with the counselors, and two counselors who work well together providing consistent services to all ninth grade students. However, the lack of summer hours for these two counselors is a significant limitation for their services. At the start of the school year, they have a large number of ninth graders who need scheduling adjustments. With the ninth grade year being such a pivotal year of transition, many parents become anxious over the summer when they cannot reach their student's counselor. After ninth grade, students transition to their permanent grade ten through twelve counselors. In addition to the individual meetings, classroom and large group lessons are presented on topics such as post-secondary planning, college essay writing, PSATs/SATs, and career exploration. Additionally, a new program during which recent alumni advise seniors about the transition to college has been implemented. Programs are also offered to parents on topics such as financial aid and college planning. Some are recorded and are available on public access cable television. The counseling department's website is extensive and offers a great deal of information including links for parents and students. Evaluation data is collected from participants (parents and/or students), and programs are improved and adjusted based upon this feedback. The counseling department produces a periodic newsletter called *Knightline* which is available on the website. During their junior year, students are asked to complete the "Do What You Are" personality inventory in the career/college center. A college fair was coordinated by the counseling department and supported by the PTO. It showcased 120 colleges and was attended by 1,100 parents and students. In addition, the first annual manufacturing/construction expo was held April 30, 2009. This expo offered students and parents nontraditional career information in fields of technical education. This expo was by invitation only and was geared towards students who will not be attending a post-secondary institution. Thus, the counseling department addresses the developmental needs of all students. (parents, teachers, students, observations, standard committee)

Counselors collaborate with special education teachers and case managers by serving in a consulting capacity at all PPTs and case conferences. In addition, there are two early intervention program teams, on which two school counselors participate, one on each team. Each EIP team meets once a week for 45 minutes, and counselors also put in additional time on follow-up tasks. School counselors are involved in many other aspects of student life that include Project Lead the Way (pre-engineering program), Gay/Straight Alliance (GSA), and Women in Science and Engineering (WISE). For serious personal/emotional issues, counselors refer students to in-school and community resources. In general, school counselors are accessible to their students. The self-study survey results show that 65% of seniors says they feel comfortable going to see their school counselor; 89% of seniors reports that they see their counselor at least once or twice a year; 68% of eleventh graders reports that there are people in the school to assist with course selection. Students and parents report that if a student approaches a counselor for an appointment, they do make time to see their students. Counselors are unable to respond to student or parent requests for schedule changes or other concerns until the school year begins because there are no counselors other than the director of

counseling working during the summer. The SHS Career Center, which is housed in the SHS Library Media Center, is inadequately supplied and only periodically staffed by parent volunteers. Parents and counseling staff members are discussing ways to improve this facility to better utilize the staff to provide additional career services to students. As a result of this extensive and comprehensive program, and its effective delivery of planned and sequential programs, all students are provided with the opportunity to create a plan that will enable them to further develop their potential in the areas of personal, social, academic, and career development. (students, parents, counselors, school support staff, observations)

Health Services

The school's health services adequately provide preventive health services and direct intervention services, appropriate referrals, mandated services, emergency response mechanisms, and ongoing student health assessments. One registered nurse (RN) and two licensed professional nurses (LPNs), assisted by a full-time secretary, provide preventive and direct health services to the students of Southington High School. When students sign in to the office, they are logged in by time and reason for being there. Each student is then assessed by one of the nursing staff and appropriate action is taken. The nurses also administer doctor-prescribed medications to students during the school day. All medical referrals and social and emotional issues are assessed by the school nurse and, when appropriate, referred to school counselors, social workers, school psychologists, special education teachers, administrators, and parents. Nurses are also involved in the referral of at-risk students through the SHS Early Intervention Program which identifies and serves those in need. The nursing staff is sometimes involved with PPTs and 504 plans where medical issues are a major component of the resulting plan. According to the Endicott Survey, 91% of parent respondents is comfortable with the current health care procedures. The certified nurses perform various health screenings for all ninth grade students. In accordance with FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act), all physical exam and immunization records and medical information are updated annually and records are kept in a secure location for 50 years. A medical confidential list is published for the faculty and maintained in the nursing office. The nurses also present the mandated film on blood-borne pathogens and allergens to the faculty and staff annually. The school nurses develop a code blue team annually that consists of CPR- and AED-trained staff members and nurses. In the event of a medical emergency, code blue is announced over the loud speaker, and the location of the emergency is given. All code blue team members then report to the scene, including the Vo-Ag building. This is an adequate response system in which the entire school is involved, helping to maintain a secure environment during an emergency. There are five AEDs located throughout the building. However, the physical layout of the nurse's office is small for a school of this size and privacy is not always possible. In an emergency, this design of the space makes maneuvering a stretcher, or wheelchair, through the small office and hallway to the beds in the back difficult if not impossible. The primary objective of health services during times of emergency is to prevent further harm, stabilize the individual, and expedite the transfer of the individual to a medical treatment facility. While the nursing staff provides for student needs, the facility is inadequate to meet the needs of students in a school of this size. (observations, nursing staff, self-study, students, parents)

Library Information Services

Library and information services program and materials are somewhat integrated into

the school's curriculum and instructional program at SHS through the creation of WebQuests, pathfinders, teacher collaboration, and staff requests for the purchasing of resources supportive of the curriculum. However, recent budget reductions have had an impact on the library and information services program. Although the library is being utilized by an increasing number of teachers, it is underutilized by students, who themselves indicate that they use the library less than 25% of the time. It is also underutilized by faculty members. According to a library survey, approximately 30% of the staff uses the library to prepare for class, and 40% believes the resources are adequate. Some departments use it for particular class assignments and others for the availability of computers. The district information technology curriculum, last modified in 2005, has been rewritten this year and awaits approval by the board of education. This curriculum incorporates current revisions from the American Association of School Libraries Standards and National Education Technology Standards for Students (NETS-S) as well as including 21st century informational skills. Currently, the components of this curriculum are taught to students in small groups or on a one-to-one basis when students ask for assistance. The full-time library media specialist supports teachers' assignments by creating research tools (pathfinders, research guide handouts, and note-taking forms) for the specific tasks whenever possible. However, the teaching of information literacy skills in the context of a classroom occurs very rarely. Teachers are generally unaware of the information literacy curriculum and use the media center as a computer lab area. Without a formal and ongoing program of professional development for teachers and instruction to students around the services and resources of the library media center, the integration of library information skills and resources into the curriculum is limited and will continue to be inconsistent. (evidence box, teachers, students, observations)

Library media personnel are knowledgeable about the curriculum and support its implementation through collaboration with teachers to utilize print and non-print sources appropriate for their classes. The library media specialists assist in the creation of assignment handouts as guides that allow students to utilize the most appropriate technological application for their projects. Librarians team-teach with faculty members when they are sent an assignment requiring infusion of technology into the lesson. Librarians "pull" print materials for teachers to use in their classes in advance of a teacher's arrival in the library with a class. In the past year, there has been an increase in the number of teachers who utilize the library media specialists for class projects, but there is still an infrequent use of the library by students and staff members, limiting its potential as a vital support of the curriculum and contribution to student learning. (teachers, students, self-study, observations)

The library does not have an adequate range of materials, technologies, and services to support teaching and learning. The print collection consists of approximately 17,400 titles, many of these titles are old. Budgetary constraints during the past several years have prohibited collection update or development. The non-print collection is also underfunded and consists of two subscription search engines/databases (Nettrekker and EBSCO) and the Connecticut State Library resource (iCONN). The size of the library allows room for more than the 32 computers that are often insufficient to accommodate two classes. Although there are 13 computer labs in the school, teachers usually have access to 2 computer labs in the building. The English and world language departments have their own dedicated labs, and other departments share classrooms containing multiple computers. Some classrooms have LCD projectors, and a few have wall-mounted SMARTBoards. Each department has a mobile SMARTBoard for use in the department's classrooms. Technology resources are located in the audio visual department adjacent to the library media center. The audio visual department includes a separate television

studio staffed by a full-time technician who provides basic training in television production as an extracurricular activity or independent project. The technician produces programming and video content for the board of education, faculty meetings, small group meetings, and the public access channel. The studio produces a monthly program entitled *Spotlight Education* to highlight school activities and district programs for the entire Southington community. However, students do not utilize the studio to the fullest extent possible. Although the library media center has an instructional technology curriculum and varied technology, there is only one full-time library media specialist, two half-time clerks, and an instructional technology director helping out for two to three periods a day. As a result, students and staff members are not fully aware of what library resources are available, where to find them, or how to use them. (self-study, teachers, evidence box).

Students and faculty members have regular and frequent access to the library before, during, and after school. Teachers reserve time to bring their classes, and students are allowed to check out books at any time with a pass. Individual teachers can also request print materials on a cart for classroom use. The library is also reserved for functions other than curricular support. Although it is not big enough to serve more than two classes at any one time, the library at SHS provides ready access to students for pursuing their educational objectives. The library is open from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., but the current hours are the result of the library media specialist voluntarily coming in early and leaving later. Although this approach is currently successful, there is no guarantee that this arrangement can be sustained in the future. (self-study, teachers, observations)

The library program at SHS fosters independent inquiry by enabling many students and faculty members to use various school and community information, resources, and technologies. Students and faculty members have access to the online public access catalog, suggested readings, pathfinders, and links to local libraries and news outlets. There is also remote access to the school's databases. Library orientation is provided for freshmen, and they can access various databases on the library's Webpage enabling them to carry out independent research. Beyond ninth grade there is no formal program to reinforce library information skill development, and the majority of students in the upper grades choose not to use the library. The lack of an ongoing program of library skills development beyond ninth grade impedes the achievement of the learner expectations at Southington High School (self-study, teachers, students)

Policies for use of the Internet and technology at SHS are established and revised by the board of education. District policies have a more general nature and apply to the acquisition, use, and challenge of all instructional materials. Library media resources fall within those guidelines. Media center staff members do not have department-specific policies and guidelines for the review, acquisition, and weeding of print and non-print materials or the challenge of resources. In practice, media specialists are guided by the automated collection analysis program to establish building needs and the policies/guidelines established by the American Association of School Libraries. Without a policy for the removal of outdated or challenged materials, however, students may not have updated information resources for research projects and self-directed work. (self-study, teachers, observations, evidence box)

Special Education Services

The special education department meets or exceeds the legal requirements according to

local, state, and federal laws and guidelines on referral, identification, and support services. SHS provides special education services related to the identification, monitoring, and referral of students in accordance with local, state, and federal laws. The school provides a continuum of services to assure that students are supported in settings as individual needs require. The school also offers co-teaching and academic support as part of the special education program. The co-teaching model allows for close collaboration and appropriate support for students. Special education teachers serve as case managers, attend PPT meetings, communicate with parents, and consult with teachers. SHS offers a continuum of special education and related services to meet the individual needs of identified special education students. These services include academic support classes in which students receive additional support from members of the special education staff, the Learning for Academic Progress Program (LAPP), and team taught classes in which a special education and regular education teacher work together to deliver instruction in classes containing both regular and special education students. For students in need of more specific services, the therapeutic education program is comprised of four elements: academic engagement in a smaller setting, individual and group therapies, assessment/communication, and rewards for students who are unmotivated, nontraditional learners or who are transitioning from an alternate placement. A clinical psychologist works with the staff and students of this program. The Southington Alternative Education (ALTA) Program is also a part of the Southington Public Schools and serves at-risk students grades 9-12 in a separate facility. ALTA graduates leave the program with a stronger educational foundation, increased self-confidence, strengthened family ties, healthy adult relationships, and an inspiration to further their education. Prospective students submit applications and are selected for admission based on their willingness to make changes, abide by established student and parent contracts, and demonstrate a desire to obtain a high school diploma. Once accepted into the program, a student must complete two successful marking periods at ALTA before a request to transfer to Southington High School will be considered. Information about special education services is now posted on the district website. As a result of these very strong and consistent services, all students with learning difficulties are challenged and supported in their learning at SHS. (parents, teachers, students, observations, standard committee)

Commendations

1. The dedicated special education staff and their comprehensive services
2. The wide spectrum of services and programs offered through the counseling department
3. The ALTA program, that supports students who need a non-traditional educational setting
4. The efforts of the library information teacher who voluntarily comes in early and leaves late in order to make the resources of the library available to students and teachers
5. The SHS Ninth Grade Academy, that ensures a smooth transition from 8th to 9th grade

Recommendations

1. Improve the access to the health center by emergency services such as ambulance stretchers and personnel
2. Ensure sufficient space in the health center to provide for student privacy and the needs of the growing population of the school
3. Provide a more secure and fireproof location for student records

4. Integrate information literacy skills into all curricula and ensure the acquisition of 21st century skills
5. Develop and implement a plan to expand the programs of the library and information center beyond ninth grade
6. Develop and implement policies for the selection and removal of information resources

SUPPORT STANDARD

7

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Active community and parent participation, facilities which support school programs and services, and dependable and adequate funding are necessary for the school to achieve its mission and expectations for student learning.

1. The school shall engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and shall encourage their participation in school programs and parent support groups.
2. The school shall foster productive business/community/higher education partnerships that support student learning.
3. The school site and plant shall support and enhance all aspects of the educational program and the support services for student learning.
4. The physical plant and facilities shall meet all applicable federal and state laws and shall be in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.
5. Equipment shall be adequate, properly maintained, catalogued, and replaced when appropriate.
6. A planned and adequately funded program of building and site management shall ensure the appropriate maintenance, repair, and cleanliness of the school plant.
7. There shall be ongoing planning to address future programs, enrollment changes, staffing, facility, and technology needs as well as capital improvements.
8. The community and the district's governing body shall ensure an adequate and dependable source of revenue to provide and maintain appropriate school programs, personnel, services, facilities, equipment, technological support, materials, and supplies for student learning.
9. Faculty and building administrators shall have active involvement in the budgetary process, including its development and implementation.

Conclusions

Faculty and staff members at Southington High School use a variety of formal and informal strategies to engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and often seek to encourage their participation in school programs and parent support groups. Parent outreach efforts by the school include printed, electronic, multimedia, and personal face-to-face communication methods. Parents are invited to an open house event in September where they meet their children's teachers, learn about the course requirements and expectations, and learn about the school's programs and activities. Throughout the year, the school counseling department coordinates course fairs and parent workshops on postsecondary education options and financial aid planning. Parent-teacher conferences are held for one full day in November each year. Although the conference process is initiated and well-communicated by the school through the phone message system and on the school's Website, the responsibility lies heavily upon the student to deliver the conference scheduling sheet to parents and individual teachers. PowerSchool is a web-based program used to report grades and attendance. A parent portal that requires parent log-in allows them to stay informed of students' academic progress. In addition to PowerSchool, other online communication vehicles used include: individual e-mail transmissions, group e-mail message blasts, teacher and school websites, and an electronic school newsletter. Although teachers have reported that they received one two-hour training in Website design and management, individual teacher Website maintenance is inconsistent throughout the building. Meal Pay is a new online system that allows parents to monitor the lunch purchases of their children; thus keeping them informed of students' nutrition habits. The reported increase in the number of eligible free and reduced meal purchases has been attributed to Meal Pay because an assigned student pin code allows a greater degree of confidentiality. The school also utilizes the local media to keep parents informed of events and activities. In an effort to encourage attendance at SHS events, the school places advertisements in the local newspaper. The Southington High School Television (SHS-TV) promotes parent involvement through a host of programs aired on the local access channel. SHS-TV allows parents to see media work produced by their children. Spotlight on Education is a recorded and televised program featuring the superintendent of schools on a variety of school-related topics. The superintendent also invites parents in for "brown bag lunches" once per month and welcomes parents to meet with him in his office on a 'no appointment necessary basis' each morning from 6:30 am - 7:30 am. PTO meetings with the principal have received favorable feedback. Many parents have hands-on involvement in the high school. Parents serve as volunteer tutors and guest speakers. The school community prides itself on the successful development of the award-winning Chinese Club and its operation of the Career Center. The SHS Interact Club, which promotes community service work, maintains active parent involvement. The athletic booster club is open to all parents and is governed by formal bylaws. The booster club plans spirit activities, fundraisers, and recognition events. All activities, programs, and events are communicated through the school's activity calendar posted on the website. Students at Southington High School benefit from the school's efforts to engage parents as partners in education. (self-study, teachers, students, parents, school support staff)

Most aspects of the school foster productive business, community, and higher education partnerships that support and enhance student learning. There is community involvement in several areas of the school. Examples of community involvement include the Corner Cafe, a not-for-profit restaurant managed by students in culinary classes, open to the public three days per week. The students in the class invite senior citizens to a dinner and dance night hosted by the Corner Cafe. Students enrolled in the Life After High School class create fleece neck pillows for

the elderly at local nursing homes through the “Cause We Care” community service project located in Newington. In addition, members of the National Honor Society and Key Club complete community service hours to fulfill membership requirements. Community partnerships enhance student learning through direct interactions with students in the classroom. Former NBC meteorologist Art Horn spoke with students in ninth grade science classes about global warming. Students in the class and their English teachers were also asked to generate a persuasive essay written to the town council about current issues. Social studies classes invite students to write letters to senators about growing concerns mirrored in historical happenings. Local businesses are also incorporated into school programs. People's Choice, a local vendor, supports the school's food service by selling pizza in the cafeteria a few days a week. Businesses and organizations such as Chili's restaurant, Goodwill, and area nursing homes have provided vocational opportunities for special needs students. The special education department works collaboratively with local businesses to create opportunities that foster a sense of independence in students. These work experiences often enable students to secure jobs after high school. Furthermore, the town's Apple Harvest Festival coordinators and the local YMCA work with the school community. Within the school community, general education students interact in positive ways with special needs peers through the Best Buddies Program and Unified Sports Teams. While the Unified Sports program was unsuccessful in securing adequate funding to continue, Unico, a local vendor, provided generous support to assure its survival. Other community partners such as United Way, Southington Education Foundation, the Sexual Assault Crisis Center, and the substance abuse center visit the school to provide students with mentoring. Students at the school are offered a variety of opportunities to earn college credit through local higher education partnerships. Students in the “Careers in Education” class earn three college credits through Tunxis Community College. The college also provides grants for students in the class to generate Family Literacy Bags to promote reading skills and parental involvement for young children in the community. Project Lead the Way, an engineering program through the University of Connecticut, also offers students a chance to earn college credits. RIT and Naugatuck Community College offer additional opportunities to earn early college credits in various classes. Bristol Tech and Wilcox Tech are two high school programs in neighboring districts that offer vocational opportunities to earn high school credits. These local community partnerships enhance student learning by providing students a wide-range of opportunities to pursue their passions. (self-study, panel presentation, teachers, students)

The current school site and plant do not adequately support all aspects of the educational program and the support services for student learning. The new construction of the Carl M. Small Agriculture Science and Technology Regional Center which opened in 2007 has allowed the expansion of the vocational-agriculture science program, thus providing multiple hands-on and real-life experiential opportunities that enhance student learning. The vocational-agriculture science center accommodates plant and animal life in various areas inside and around the outside of the building. Classroom space in this new construction center allows for student seat work and hands-on laboratory learning. The main building houses the Ninth Grade Academy which supports the middle to high school transition. The student-run Achieve Federal Credit Union, the DECA mart, DECA school store, and the Corner Café support and extend learning experiences. In addition, there are thirteen computer labs throughout the building for individual and group research and work completion. However, physical space in the main building remains a challenge for many departments. There is limited space for PPT, 504, and other parent meetings. Dedicated department work space is provided to teachers, but the current phone system allows only calls to the main office and 911. As a result, teachers do

not have sufficient space and available phones to carry out confidential conversations with parents and guardians. Teachers see this as a hindrance in their continuous efforts to engage parents in the education of their children. Many teachers share classrooms and travel between two or more classrooms each day using mobile carts. Sometimes, it is not feasible for teachers to transport supplies, materials, and equipment needed for their lessons. Although teachers work collaboratively to try to accommodate each other when classrooms need to be shared, and the school seeks to be resourceful in maximizing space, some classroom assignments are not compatible with the subject area being taught, and moving between classrooms throughout the day decreases instructional time due to set up and take down procedures. Sometimes, classroom instructional start time is delayed when a teacher has to wait for the departing teacher to clear the classroom. Student and teacher post-class opportunities for interaction, clarification, and feedback is also minimized when the teacher has to travel some distance within four minutes to another classroom or must clear out of his/her previous classroom. Generally, in the physical education classes, students can elect to participate in fitness activities of their choice (e.g. archery, basketball, yoga). A broken space divider in the west gymnasium has adversely impacted the implementation of the curriculum and delivery of instruction in the physical education classes. There are usually three simultaneous activities taking place in the west gymnasium. As the gym cannot be closed off, student safety is also compromised. As a result, the athletic fields are utilized on good climate days, but activity time is sacrificed because of the time it takes to move students to the closest outdoor field after their locker room change. Furthermore, the weather is an unpredictable element. Compromised student-teacher connections, challenged parent outreach efforts, and diminished instructional time are a few implications of the building's physical space shortage issues. (self-study, teachers, facility tour, student shadowing, students, administrators)

The school's physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are adequately compliant with local fire, health, and safety regulations. The school's renovation and completion of the vocational-agriculture science center adhered to federal and state laws. Certificates and operating tags were visible in most areas. Although the school has many "accidental" fire drills, SHS is working with the local fire department to improve the system. The school holds monthly fire and lockdown drills to ensure the safety of the students and staff members. Handicapped refuge areas can be found throughout the building. Most teachers keep their doors locked and classroom visitors are required to identify themselves before they are allowed to enter the classroom. Most classrooms have an emergency evacuation map posted in the classroom, but several are either missing, not posted in a visible location, or badly faded. Computer labs, kitchen areas, and science classrooms contain fire extinguishers for additional safety beyond a sprinkler system. Kitchen areas and science classrooms include eye wash stations and some evidence of fire blankets. The plant also has five automated external defibrillators (AEDs), and a number of staff members are trained in the use of the equipment. In the kitchen, a refrigerator service temperature log is used to report when temperatures do not fall in an optimal range, and observed science laboratories have visible inspection records. Air quality and mold reports are conducted annually and meet recommended guidelines. A security camera system is used to record activity in areas inside and around the perimeter of the school as an added safety and surveillance measure. A school resource officer has an office on the second floor of the main building and has access privileges to the school's student database as well as the Southington Police Department's information system. The compliance with fire, health, and safety regulations allows for uninterrupted school operations. (classroom observations, self-study, panel presentation, facility tour, evidence box)

Not all equipment is adequate, properly maintained, catalogued, and replaced. Funding issues and the lack of an accountability system and inventory limits the maintenance and replacement of equipment. Science labs are outdated for the delivery of 21st century skills. School-wide announcements are made through the public announcement system to communicate important events and activities, to recognize and celebrate numerous student and staff achievements, and to recite the Pledge of Allegiance each morning. Although the public announcement system was replaced last year, problems have persisted, and announcements continue to be inaudible in some areas of the building. The Simplex school-wide clock system has been defective for a number of years. As an interim intervention while a repair request is pending, several classes have been outfitted with a battery-operated wall clock. During numerous classroom visits, many replacement clocks were either not keeping correct time or in need of a new battery. A budget request for a new clock system has been made again this year. School Dude is an online maintenance request system that faculty and staff members can access through myschoolbuilding.com. This system enables the custodian to receive, assign, fulfill, and track work order requests throughout the building. Additional School Dude system training for the head custodian would increase ease and frequency of use, and subsequently, work order completion efficiency. Teacher use of the system is inconsistent, a problem that may be solved with additional training. The agricultural science program engages students and faculty members in the upkeep of the athletic fields and maintenance of some landscaping equipment. This has proven to be a cost-savings benefit for the school and the district. This use of student and faculty resources is one of many ways that the school uses creativity to improvise when resources fall short of the needs of the building. Observations made throughout the building revealed light covers that are hanging, ceiling tiles that are cracked or missing, and classroom and corridor vent grates that are covered with thick dust or were missing. In the girls' locker room, the hand dryer and shower overhead do not turn off for a substantial period of time, thus creating a waste of energy and water. In the auxiliary gymnasium, wiring was exposed in one area, and the water fountains were not operable or were problematic. In some respects, the School Dude system has improved the response time of work order requests due to the office support staff's knowledge of the system; however, a custodial accountability plan is needed. Custodial staff cross-training is necessary to maintain sufficient operations throughout the plant when custodians are absent and there is no replacement for them for one or more days. The lack of adequate funding and a plan of school site maintenance checks and balances leave the school vulnerable to future health and safety code violations. (self-study, facility tour, observations, support staff)

A planned and funded program of building and site management does exist, but it is not adequately funded and has been further impacted by custodial staff cuts. Because the high school is heavily utilized by the community for private use and for school-sponsored events that go late into the evening, night custodians are often unable to complete daily routine cleanings resulting in sometimes unsafe and unsanitary conditions. Even with some energy conservation efforts, the cost of keeping the building open after school hours is often difficult to factor into the budget. While the school complies with the district's bidding process, the budget deficit limits the selection of vendors. Currently, due to budget cuts, there are 5.5 custodial staff employees while in April 2007 there were 8 custodial staff employees. The cuts in custodial staff and school matrons place limits on site management and require the custodian's union to take on more responsibilities including those of the agricultural science center. Some items sit in disrepair for long periods of time and do not allow for maximum operation of a particular area or piece equipment. Custodial staff cuts do not support student health and safety needs. (self-study materials, teachers, support staff)

The school's ongoing plan to address future programs, enrollment changes, staffing, facility, and technology needs is inadequate. Enrollment projections and staffing indicate patterns likely to take place in a five-year period through the cohort survival technique under the New England School Development Council (NESDEC). NESDEC advises schools to measure projected enrollments each October. According to the self-study, there are currently 2,126 students enrolled at the school. As anticipated numbers increase, the existing inadequate space with teachers sharing classrooms may also increase. Although technology can be found in most classrooms, the school may have difficulty maintaining current technology initiatives including the replacement of LCD projector bulbs and modernizing computer hardware and software. Facility maintenance projects are requested in the budget, but some projects have taken priority over others. Part of the plan to address current and future programs specifically at the high school include leasing technology hardware and targeting equity through competitive grant funds due to the elementary level completed projects. Other funding sources that the school may be able to access are Southington Foundation grants and Knightvertising revenue. The school's limited ongoing planning also hinders the learner's ability to stay on target with 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, teachers, students, central office administrators, board of education)

The resources provided by the community and district's governing body are inadequate. The school's administration, faculty, staff, and superintendent of schools take great pride in the community partnerships they have established and maintained with local businesses and organizations. Although these funding sources are not assured from year to year, the efforts of the school to strengthen these partnerships have resulted in small funding increases from their benefactors over the years. Grant opportunities pursued by the business office and the high school teachers have also supported the school. The athletic programs rely on community support, but the operating budget places the needs within the classroom as a priority. Since there is no assurance of dependable revenue, future programming that supports pupils may be at risk. (self-study, parents, central office administrators, board of education)

The faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the budgetary process, including its development and implementation. Teachers informally communicate needs to their department heads regarding supplies and equipment. There is also a formal process involving the school's administrators. The budget process begins annually in late September and early October. The central office administrators provide a budget handbook for school administrators to analyze building needs for the school year. The school's principal receives input from department administrators and carefully prioritizes items requested. The central office officials discuss the proposed budget with the superintendent. Then, the board of education decides on the budget by late January, and the board of finance reviews it. In April, the town council makes the final decision after a public hearing. The budgetary process ensures that faculty members and administrators have the opportunity to thoughtfully consider student needs. (self-study, parents, central office administrators, teachers, board of education)

Commendations

1. The wide variety of community partnerships with local businesses, agencies, and organizations within town and neighboring locales
2. The many ways that the school uses to connect with families and encourage their involvement

3. The community support of inclusive practices through their financial support of Best Buddies and Unified Sports
4. Recent improvements to the Carl M. Small Agriculture Science and Technology Regional Center that have enhanced the agricultural science program and expanded opportunities for student learning
5. The partnerships with higher education institutions that have provided opportunities for students to challenge themselves and receive the benefits of college credit

Recommendations

1. Develop and implement a site management accountability system for the custodial staff
2. Develop and implement a plan complete with targeted timelines for the appropriate maintenance and repair of equipment as well as technology support, repair, and replacement
3. Correct the safety hazard posed by the broken wall divider in the west gymnasium
4. Develop and implement a plan to ensure cleanliness and ongoing repair of equipment

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 Southington 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 Southington 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 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 CPSS Standards. The Commission's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix on page 77. All other substantive changes should be included in the Two- and Five-Year Progress Reports and/or the Annual Report which is required of each member school to ensure that the Commission office has current statistical data on the school.

The Commission urges school officials to establish a formal follow-up program

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

The visiting team would like to express its appreciation to the Southington High School administrators, faculty, staff, and students for their hospitality and candor during our visit. It was clear that the SHS community is highly committed to the processes of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and used the self-study process to determine next steps in the process of continuous improvement. You welcomed us into the SHS family and made our visit an enjoyable and professionally rewarding experience.

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
- 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
- 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
- identification by the state as an underperforming school
- takeover by the state
- inordinate user fees

Appendix B

Southington High School NEAS&C Visiting Committee May 2 - 5, 2010

Linda C. Van Wagenen, Ed.D. (Chair)
Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
Plainville Community Schools
Plainville, CT 06062

Donna Alogna
PE/Health Teacher
Hill Regional Career Magnet
New Haven, Connecticut

James Crabb
Latin Teacher
Hall High School
West Hartford, Connecticut

Christopher Dittrich
Social Studies Teacher
Daniel Hand High School
Madison, Connecticut

Garrett Dukette
English Teacher
Bacon Academy
Colchester, Connecticut

Robert Esposito
Director of Guidance
Amity Regional High School
Woodbridge, Connecticut

Denice Daniels Fogel, Ph. D.
Library Media Teacher
Norwalk High School
Norwalk, Connecticut

Valerie Forney
Science Teacher
Woodland Regional High School
Prospect, Connecticut

Carol Szulc (Assistant Chair)
Assistant Principal
Windsor High School
Windsor, Connecticut

Roszena Haskins
Assistant Principal
Conard High School
West Hartford, Connecticut

Kristin Mancini
World Language Teacher
Daniel Hand High School
Madison, Connecticut

Robert Markowicz
Mathematics Teacher
Glastonbury High School
Glastonbury, Connecticut

Ann Murcko
English Teacher
Bassick High School
Bridgeport, Connecticut

Michael Podraza
Assistant Principal
East Greenwich High School
East Greenwich, Rhode Island

Michael Regan
School Social Worker
Guilford High School
Guilford, Connecticut

Jeffrey Stead
Chemistry Teacher
South Windsor High School
South Windsor, Connecticut

Diane Vumback
Business Teacher
O. H. Platt High School
Meriden, Connecticut