

**New England Association of  
Schools and Colleges**



Committee on Public Secondary Schools

**Report of the Visiting Committee for  
Oxford High School**

**Oxford, Connecticut 06478**

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## **STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS**

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

The Committee on Public Secondary Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges considers this visiting committee report of Oxford High School to be a privileged document submitted by the Committee 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 Oxford High School in terms of the Committee on Public Secondary Schools' Standards for Accreditation. Neither the total report nor any of its subsections is to be considered an evaluation of any individual staff member but rather a professional appraisal of the school as it appeared to the visiting committee.

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## INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

### Teaching and Learning Standards

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of and for Student Learning

### Support of Teaching and Learning Standards

School Culture and Leadership

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning

The accreditation program for public schools involves a threefold process: the self-study conducted by the local professional staff, the on-site evaluation conducted by the CPSS'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 CPSS in the Follow-Up process. Continued accreditation requires that the school be reevaluated at least once every ten years and that it shows continued progress addressing identified needs.

### **Preparation for the 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 Oxford High School, a committee of five 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.

The self-study of Oxford High School extended over a period of 15 school months from September 2013 to November 2014. The visiting committee was pleased to note that students, parents and community members joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

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

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

### **The Process Used by the Visiting Committee**

A visiting committee of 16 evaluators was assigned by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Oxford High School. The visiting committee members spent four days in Oxford, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students, and parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school meets the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented public school teachers, building level administrators, and central office administrators, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Oxford High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 42 hours shadowing 14 students for a half day
- a total of 20 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 32 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers
- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

Each conclusion on the report was agreed to by visiting committee consensus. Sources of evidence for each conclusion drawn by the visiting committee appear in parenthesis in the Standards sections of the report. The seven Standards for Accreditation reports include commendations and recommendations that in the visiting committee's judgment will be helpful to the school as it works to improve teaching and learning and to better meet Committee Standards.

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

## School and Community Summary

Nestled in the southern portion of the historic Naugatuck Valley, an hour and a half from New York City and two and a half hours from Boston, MA, Oxford High School serves the community of Oxford, a small town with a population of 12,732 people.

Oxford, located in New Haven County, is a small, rural town that continues to grow and progress, even in today's economy. With a state-of-the-art high school, major real estate and industrial development, infrastructure improvements, the Oxford Greens public golf course, numerous recreational parks and activities, and a busy airport, Oxford is a bustling little town.

Oxford's median household income is \$93,569.00 and the unemployment rate is 6.8%. The poverty rate is 2.2%. The population consists of: 12,152 White people, 145 Black people, 200 Asian Pacific people, 13 Native American people, 515 Hispanic people, and 222 who claim themselves "Other" or "Multi-Race."

In addition to Oxford High School with a student population of 602 students, Great Oak Middle School comprises grades 6-8 with 517 students; Oxford Center School comprises grades 3-5 and has a student population of 504 students; Quaker Farms Elementary School comprises grades K-2 and has an enrollment of 428 students. 15.3% attend non-public schools.

The Oxford Public School District is ranked 155 of 166 school districts in the state in terms of per pupil expenditures and expended \$12,819.15 per pupil during the 2012-2013 school year compared to a state average expenditure of \$17,611.00 per pupil. In 2012, state, federal, and other resources accounted for ten percent of all funds received in the district, leaving ninety percent of funding to be obtained through local resources. Sixty-seven percent of local property taxes are allocated to the public schools. During the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years, one student paid non-resident tuition fees \$9,000.00 to attend Oxford High School.

Oxford High School includes students in grades 9-12 with the total enrollment of 602 students divided between 312 males and 290 females. The school population has steadily risen over the years. When Oxford High School opened in 2007, it housed a freshman and sophomore class. In 2007-2008, the school housed three classes; the 2009-2010 school year was the first year with full enrollment (freshmen through seniors) with a total enrollment of 561 students. Since then, the student population has fluctuated slightly: 629 students in 2010, 584 students in 2011, 589 students in 2012. The ethnic, racial, and cultural composition has remained relatively constant with ten African-American students, fourteen Asian students, and thirty-five Hispanic students during the 2013-2014 school year. The average dropout rate for the past two years has been .02%, the average daily student attendance 98%, and the average attendance rate among teachers 98%.

There are 54 certified instructors at Oxford High School, creating a ratio of 11:1. Individual teachers carry an average load of 110 students with an average class size of 22 students. Students attend school for 182 days and for a minimum of 932 hours.

All Oxford High School students are placed in leveled (college preparatory or honors) classes concentrating on four core academic areas of English, mathematics, social studies, and science. All students are required to take four years of English, three credits in history/social studies, including one full credit of America History and one-half credit of Civics, seven credits of either science or math (three of science, three of math, one elective), two credits of health and physical education, one fine arts credit, one and a half credits in the area of applied technologies with one-half credit being "Communicating with Text" with the remainder of students' programs filled from a variety of elective courses, including two world languages (Italian and Spanish).

Students in grades nine through twelve are recommended for placement in their core courses: college preparatory, honors, or Advanced Placement (grades 11 and 12 only, where offered). Thirty-seven percent of students are enrolled in honors classes, sixty-

three percent in college preparatory courses, and eighteen percent in Advanced Placement courses. Approximately twelve percent of students receive special education services (six percent have individualized education plans; six percent have 504 plans).

Oxford High School offers a variety of co-curricular activities for its students in which over seventy-five percent of students every year participate in at least one co-curricular activity.

Sixty-five percent of graduates from the Class of 2013 attended four-year colleges, with twenty-two percent enrolling in two-year colleges, and thirteen percent entering either the work force or “other.” Graduates take advantage of the considerable educational opportunities available to choose from in Connecticut as they choose from such colleges and universities as the University of Connecticut, Yale University, or Southern Connecticut State University, to name a few.

Oxford High School has established partnerships with local businesses, including Travelers Insurance and Allstate Insurance in conjunction with our capstone program. Oxford High School sponsors numerous food drives and fundraising events for local charities, including a local hospital’s breast cancer research center. We sponsor two yearly blood drives and participate in a walk against violence yearly as well. Our Perspectives on Race course includes a partnership with urban school, Bassick High School, of Bridgeport, Connecticut in which students from each school rotate experiences for several school days. The Oxford High School varsity football team spends a Holiday Visit day at Oxford’s Senior Center wherein they offer a raffle and present gifts. The football team also sponsors a town-wide clean-up one day every fall. The Oxford High School Youth Conservation Corps has between 10 and 20 students who regularly perform community-based environmental work.

Oxford High School has also established an effective partnership with one of the local institutions of higher education. Seniors may enroll in one college course, the ECE

Spanish course, wherein they receive one credit toward their degree from the University of Connecticut.

Students are recognized for their accomplishments at our annual Undergraduate Awards Night, Senior Awards Night, National Honor Society Induction, World Language Honor Society Induction, and various board meetings.

## Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

The Oxford High School community believes that the mission of the school is to support, inspire and encourage all students to strive for academic success as they develop into productive members of society.

1. Use real-world digital and other research tools to access, evaluate and effectively apply information appropriate for authentic tasks.
2. Work independently and collaboratively to solve problems and accomplish goals.
3. Communicate information clearly and effectively using a variety of tools/media in varied contexts for a variety of purposes.
4. Demonstrate innovation, flexibility and adaptability in thinking patterns, work habits, and working/learning conditions.
5. Effectively apply the analysis, synthesis, and evaluative processes that enable productive problem solving.
6. Value and demonstrate personal responsibility, character, cultural understanding, and ethical behavior.

## Teaching and Learning Standard

# 1

## Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

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

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

## Conclusions

The school community deliberately engages in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning. Under the leadership of the Mission Statement Committee, the mission statement of Oxford High School was revised into a core values and beliefs statement, beginning in 2010. This three-year process was implemented utilizing the NEASC guidebook combined with examination of several NEASC-accredited schools' core values and beliefs statement. Stakeholders involved included faculty, students, parents, community members and the Oxford board of education. The revision process consisted of electronic feedback to the committees draft via email, student feedback through advisory, meetings with a small focus group of parents, online surveys to the parents, and surveys to the community through Oxford Patch, a local, digital news source. The Oxford core values and beliefs are pervasive throughout the daily life of the Oxford High School learning community through visible posted signage and banners and audible reinforcement through the announcements daily. In order to garner buy-in and ownership over the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, which will support and drive student experience and achievement, all key stakeholders must continuously be involved with and contribute to the crafting of these touchstones for the learning community. (self-study, teacher interviews, students, parents, school board, panel presentation, classroom observations)

The school has challenging and measurable 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations for all students which address academic competencies and are defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted high levels of achievement, but does not have these for civic or social competencies. Students are expected to meet challenging and measureable goals. Rubrics that consider the core values and beliefs statement have been developed in the areas of writing, reading, problem solving, technology, and communication. Oxford High School has a list of challenging 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, which can be labeled as academic, civic and/or social competencies. Analytic rubrics are in place for most of the listed learning expectations with the exception of expectations

categorized as social and civic. Each existing analytic rubric utilizes the same terminology to assess student progress, such as “exceeds,” “meets,” “near,” or “below” the expectation listed in the rubric. According to the Endicott survey, the percentage of students who agree that Oxford High School’s 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations are challenging is 67.7 percent. In order to provide an authentic and meaningful 21<sup>st</sup> century learning experience, the school-wide 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations must be rigorous and measurable to provide a framework of progress for all students in academic, social and civic competencies. (teacher interviews, Endicott survey, student work, student shadowing, self-study, panel presentation, students, parents)

The school’s core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations are sporadically reflected in the culture of the school, drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and guide the school’s policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations. The culture of the school is reflective of the school’s core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, as evidenced by several departments’ efforts to offer opportunities for community service projects, independent learning opportunities and other community involvement and outreach opportunities that are designed to motivate and inspire students with real-life applications. Academic learning is valued as evidenced by positive reinforcement, students having opportunity and choice in their selected work, and visual prompts and reminders concerning academic achievement. There have not been any specific, documented changes made to the curriculum, instruction, assessment practice, or school policies and procedures in response to the school’s core values, beliefs about learning, or 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations; however, the core values and beliefs are pervasive within the learning experiences. For example, students report being supported and encouraged by the faculty to achieve their full potential as they develop into young adults through the opportunity for independent and community learning. Resources have been allocated in response to the core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations through committees being formed, meeting time, and professional development plans. Students, faculty, and administration report a culture where there is a mutual respect between students and adults; students report feeling a sense of a positive peer culture at Oxford High School.

When the core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations are ubiquitously and prominently applied with fidelity in order to develop and implement a school culture where the collaboratively developed core values, beliefs and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations drive the culture and decision-making on policies, procedures and curriculum, student learning will be fully supported . (students, teacher interviews, student work, self-study, department leaders, classroom observations)

The school infrequently reviews and revises its core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as on district and school community priorities. School leadership engaged in a process to develop the core values statement that was successful beginning in 2010, but has no timeline moving forward for review and revision of this statement. School leaders have indicated a plan to develop a committee that will work to review and revise the analytic rubrics and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. There is no evidence to support that school leaders or faculty can cite readings and research to ensure that they are cognizant of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills. The local business community has been involved in helping to create many extended learning opportunities for the students of Oxford High School. These learning opportunities support the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and learning expectations. Local businesses involved include various medical facilities, recreational facilities, and community service agencies. Through the rubrics that measure progress toward school-wide learning expectations, the school is able to collect data about student achievement. There is limited opportunity for staff to analyze this data; the staff experiences few opportunities to examine data and work collaboratively to review the targeted school-wide learning priorities and student progress toward mastery of each. The current identified learning expectations align with the district's learning goals. In order to garner consistent and meaningful buy-in and ownership, as well as to maintain relevance and focus for the school community, all key stakeholders must be regularly involved in a cycle of reviewing and revising of the school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (teacher interviews, self-study, school leadership, board of education)

**Commendations:**

1. The student-centered approach to promoting a positive peer culture that is focused upon learning and academics
2. The many and varietal opportunities for community outreach and civic service through volunteer and extended, real-life learning experiences, such as the capstone program
3. The dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process of crafting Oxford High School's core values and beliefs
4. The prominent visibility and audibility of the Oxford High School core values and beliefs statement

**Recommendations:**

1. Develop and implement analytic rubrics for civic and social learning expectations
2. Create ongoing opportunities for all key stakeholders, such as parents, community members and board members, to become more formally involved in applying the core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to school-wide policies and practices
3. Establish a cohesive connection and thread within learning experiences, rubrics, 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, and core values and beliefs
4. Develop and implement a process to ensure the school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations
5. Develop and implement a process, plan, and timeline for assessment and revision of the core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school community priorities

**2****Curriculum**

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

1. The curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
2. The curriculum is written in a common format that includes:
  - units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills
  - the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
  - instructional strategies
  - assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics.
3. The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through:
  - inquiry and problem solving
  - higher order thinking
  - cross-disciplinary learning
  - authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school
  - informed and ethical use of technology.
4. There is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum.

5. Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.
6. Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.
7. The district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research.

## Conclusions

The curriculum at Oxford High School is not fully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Each department has identified two 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations that they are responsible for addressing; however, formal documentation of this distribution is missing. All 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations are listed in every course curriculum which demonstrates there is overlap, but this creates confusion about which department has primary responsibility for which 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. There is also no clear connection between the course content and the learning expectations. While teachers can verbally explain which school-wide rubrics they utilize in their classes, they are less clear about which learning expectations they are required to teach. Teachers are required to report school-wide rubric scores at least once a quarter in the comment section of each student's report card. As this process is new, the data has not yet been used in making decisions to add or delete courses or units of study from the curriculum. In order to have curriculum documents that ensure all students have opportunities to practice and achieve 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations need to be integrated into the curriculum writing process. (teacher interviews, curriculum documents, Curriculum Standard subcommittee, program of studies)

The Oxford High School curriculum is written in a common format using a new CCSS-aligned, backward design curriculum planning template; however, there is no clear connection to the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Over the past four years, teachers have been using the *Understanding by Design (UBD)* approach to curriculum. The current template in place to write curriculum was developed two years ago, with minor changes to the template being implemented this past year. This template includes essential questions. It also includes content (Know), concepts (Understand), and skills (Do). According to the Endicott survey, 70.4 percent of teachers believe, "the curriculum is written in a common format that includes: units of study with essential questions, concepts, content and skills; the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations; instructional

strategies; assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics.” This template seems to be systemically applied and all core subject areas and vocational and technical courses have utilized the common template. While the curriculum template includes instruction practices under the heading “Instructional Supports,” not every unit includes this section. The curriculum document for each unit includes unit assessments and performance tasks, but there is no clear connection to the school’s 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations through school-wide rubrics. Students need more practice using the school-wide rubrics to assess themselves, which would allow for more student ownership and reflective opportunities to personalize the school’s 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. This needs to be reflected in the curriculum document. After reviewing the curriculum, there seems to be an inconsistency in how the template is being used, in the interpretation of what constitutes instructional strategies and the Know, Understand, Do (KUD) section. In addition, teachers have identified a critical need for professional development on curriculum writing. When clear links between the school-wide rubrics and assessments are made, there will be clearer connections between the school’s 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and the curriculum format. (Endicott survey, curriculum documents, school-wide analytic rubrics, teacher interviews, self-study)

There is minimal evidence to demonstrate that the curriculum supports student inquiry and problem solving, higher order thinking, cross-disciplinary, authentic learning opportunities both inside and outside of school, and informed and ethical use of technology. While the self-study states that there is sufficient evidence, after reviewing the curriculum documents it is not clear where the written curriculum shows the evidence. It is evident in some examples of student work that students are using higher order thinking skills, inquiry learning, and authentic learning; however, these learning opportunities are not clearly identified in the curriculum document. Student work examples of authentic learning experiences and higher order thinking include the research project in Digital Photo, create a TED Talk and the “resolve world issues” unit in English and the “create-a-game” assignment in physical education. The senior capstone is another example of a comprehensive, authentic, personalized learning

experience. Students have complete ownership over this project and are provided with an opportunity to showcase the skills they have acquired over the past four years in a real-world environment. According to the Endicott survey, 77.9 percent of students believe the content of the courses challenges them to think critically and solve problems. The curriculum template does provide an opportunity to showcase interdisciplinary connections; currently, this is not utilized effectively by each department. Only 55 percent of both students and teachers believe courses include cross-disciplinary topics. Through looking at student work, there appears to be a narrow emphasis on ethical use of technology in the form of citing sources. The curriculum does not explicitly show a more general emphasis on informed and ethical use of technology across disciplines. When a greater range of higher order thinking, inquiry and authentic learning are defined and utilized along with increased use/availability of technology in the classroom then students will have increased success in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (curriculum documents, Endicott survey, student work, appropriate use agreement, teacher interviews)

While striving toward the goal of greater alignment of written and taught curriculum, the progress varies between and among different departments at Oxford High School. To ensure the alignment of the written and taught curriculum, the English department chair requires weekly email submission of lesson plans and weekly meetings. The social studies department, math department, science department, world languages department, and applied technologies, music, and fine arts departments all utilize common performance tasks and identical midterm and final assessments. Although there is no formal process for department chairs to guarantee alignment of the written and taught curriculum, all departments use email and ongoing informal conversations and collaborations between and among peer professionals. According to the Endicott survey, 77.8 percent of staff believes the written and taught curricula are aligned. The superintendent believes it is the responsibility of the department chairs to guarantee that the written and taught curriculum match through the use of formal and informal observations. When formal structures are defined and implemented then the school will

more fully assure that written and taught curriculum are aligned. (Endicott survey, teacher interviews, Curriculum Standard subcommittee, self-study)

Curricular coordination exists to some degree between and among academic departments within the school, and communication within many departments is improving. Currently, communications with the sending schools are limited, but the district has plans in place for improvement. There appears to be some confusion among staff concerning the administrative structure that supports curriculum development. As of now, there are plans in place to implement a formal curriculum review cycle. This would involve evaluating the curriculum for the core areas every five years. This will be coupled with ongoing teacher-initiated adjustment of the curriculum with the support of department chairs. Currently, there is not a district K-12 curriculum guide to illustrate coordination and articulation of the curriculum. The superintendent has plans to continue to work on the vertical articulation, which will include expanding department chair responsibilities to include middle school curriculum oversight. As of now, K-5 and 6-12 meet for articulation, and the superintendent has the goal of putting these together to form a clear, centralized, vision. Once this vision is complete, there are plans to ensure the public has access to all appropriate curriculum documents. Currently, the teachers do not have common planning time and have not implemented PLCs or critical friends groups. Because of this, there has not been effective use of data collection to adjust the curriculum. The superintendent plans to form data teams to inform and drive instruction. Over the past few years, teams of teachers have engaged in professional development from ACES and CES, which is focused on curriculum. There have also been paid opportunities for English and math to write curriculum over the summer. The next priority will be science and social studies. The superintendent will also emphasize further curriculum professional development and plans for this are being developed with the Professional Development and Evaluation Committee. As the superintendent's vision becomes fully implemented, appropriate opportunities for curriculum coordination and communication of vertical articulation will benefit staff, students, and the public. (curriculum documents, superintendent, teacher interviews, Curriculum Standard subcommittee)

Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are somewhat sufficient to fully implement the curriculum. Staffing levels are adequate to deliver the curriculum as observable class size average is 22 students; however, 37 percent of teachers disagree that that the school has sufficient professional staff to implement the curriculum. There is evidence of significant support for co-curricular experiences. The budget supports numerous music, drama, club, athletic, and other leadership opportunities. Several significant components of the curriculum seem to exist outside of the formal classroom experience. For example, the senior capstone experience, which represents a well-articulated co-curricular program, does not seem to be included in the curriculum. This is despite its powerful impact on the senior experience. Teachers and students believe that instructional materials, equipment, and supplies are adequate to deliver the curriculum. According to student interviews, the school has ample textbooks for each student, including extra copies in classrooms. It appears that the budget is sufficient to support the curriculum materials. The library media center has sufficient print and non-print resources to fully implement the curriculum. Various electronic databases are also available for students and teachers to conduct research. According to a survey given to staff by the library media specialist, 48 percent of teachers agree that the LMC book collection meets the classroom needs, and 42 percent of teachers agree that the school's subscription to online databases meets classrooms needs. In contrast, on the Endicott survey, 79.6 percent of staff believes that the LMC has enough resources to fully support the curriculum. Teachers and students have expressed a need to add more computers to the school and teachers have identified a growing need for a "bring your own device" (BYOD) policy. To further develop the curriculum, more ready access to computers and technology is essential. For example, there are only three computer labs which are often booked for weeks in advance. Also, there are not enough computers in the library media center for each student in some of the courses; however, 84 percent of the parents and 81 percent of students believe that the school's technology resources are adequate according to the Endicott survey. Each department has at least one classroom with a SMARTBoard. Additionally, students feel they have easy access to printers. When the school ensures

access to 21<sup>st</sup> century tools then the school will be able to implement a 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum. (curriculum documents, School and Community Summary, teacher interviews, students, LMC survey, self-study)

The district is making minimal progress toward providing the professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum using assessment results and current research. When the self-study was released, the district did not have a coordinator or committee in place to oversee curriculum review. New this year, the superintendent is also the curriculum, assessment and instructional director. She has put into place a curriculum committee which consists of herself, the high school English department chair, and the K-6 reading specialist. This committee has begun to score select curriculum units using the EQUip rubric. Feedback to curriculum writers is ongoing; however there is insufficient specific and formal time devoted to incorporating this feedback into existing units. For example, only 9.3 percent of teachers agree that they have, “sufficient time to be engaged in formal curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work.” Yet 64.8 percent of teachers agree that they are, “directly involved in curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work.” Because of this lack of time, little to no data is collected and therefore assessment results are not used to drive curriculum. Little in the way of books, professional development, articles, etc., has been provided for teachers to creatively develop, evaluate, and revise curriculum. When appropriate time and direction are provided to support the evaluation and revision of the curriculum writing then the use of assessment data and current research can be used to improve curriculum. (curriculum documents, students, teacher interviews, superintendent, Endicott survey, Curriculum Standard subcommittee, self-study)

**Commendations:**

1. The evidence of higher order thinking in lessons/student work
2. The willingness of staff to use prep and after-school time to complete curriculum units

3. The number of students participating in co-curricular activities

**Recommendations:**

1. Develop and implement a plan to ensure vertical alignment and curriculum coordination throughout the district
2. Ensure the responsibility for delivery of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations are clearly identified in the appropriate curriculum documents
3. Ensure access to technology in the classroom to allow for the full implementation of the articulated curriculum
4. Provide professional development that ensures linkage of curriculum to 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and tools that align with the school-wide rubrics
5. Ensure consistency in the completion of all curriculum writing through use of the common template
6. Create and implement a plan that ensures that the written curriculum is being taught in the classroom

**3**

**Instruction**

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

1. Teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
2. Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations by:
  - personalizing instruction
  - engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning
  - engaging students as active and self-directed learners
  - emphasizing inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking
  - applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks
  - engaging students in self-assessment and reflection
  - integrating technology.
3. Teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by:
  - using formative assessment, especially during instructional time
  - strategically differentiating
  - purposefully organizing group learning activities
  - providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom.
4. Teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by:
  - using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments
  - examining student work

- using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents
  - examining current research
  - engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.
5. Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices.

## Conclusions

Oxford High School teachers' instructional practices are examined in some areas to ensure consistency with some of the school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. OHS teachers are all clearly familiar with some of the school's identified beliefs about learning and are able to identify some learning expectations that align with instructional strategies. Since the recent revision of the core values, beliefs and learning expectations, the faculty has begun to revise the curricula and has had professional development time offered to allow alignment of rubrics to their teaching. Many teachers have provided students opportunities to use digital and other tools for authentic tasks, to engage in both independent and collaborative problem solving, and to communicate information clearly and effectively using a variety of tools and media for varied purposes. While access to computer labs is limited to availability and optimal use of time is impacted by computer loading speeds, most teachers do provide students with some opportunities throughout the school year to research and/or problem solve and to share their findings with their peers through PowerPoint presentations and posters; some teachers use school-wide rubrics to evaluate these types of students' work.

All classes utilize instructional strategies that support some of the core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations on a regular basis. Some teachers have aligned some lesson activities with school-wide rubrics (e.g., science presentations). Nearly all teachers and students provided examples of opportunities students were given in class to problem solve both independently and collaboratively, and to communicate clearly and effectively. While less common, a few teachers have developed instructional practices that allow students to use higher order thinking and to develop the ability to demonstrate innovation, flexibility, and adaptability in thinking patterns. For example, the music classes provide students opportunities to experiment with creating covers of songs in different styles, to collaborate with peers to develop new music, and to work in unique settings. Classroom observations and review of student work indicate that the use of higher order thinking skills in the classroom are rare, although 93 percent of faculty members believe that they emphasize inquiry, problem solving, and higher order

thinking. While conversations with teachers indicate work has been done to align curricula and school-wide rubrics to the core values and beliefs, there is little evidence that instructional strategies and practices are a key component of the process.

Sixty-five percent of staff indicates teachers continuously examine their instructional practices to ensure consistency with the school's core values and beliefs; however, most examination, collaboration, and reflective practice occur outside the scope of formal, allotted time. Ensuring that all of the school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations are consistently aligned with instructional practices across all curricular areas will allow students to develop skills and understandings at deeper levels needed to develop into productive members of society. (teacher interviews, facility tour, instruction committee, classroom observations, student work)

In some areas, teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations by personalizing instruction; engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning; engaging students as active and self-directed learners; emphasizing inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking; applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks; engaging students in self-assessment and reflection; and integrating technology to an acceptable degree. Most teachers personalize instruction by including differentiation strategies such as assigning topics based on interest. Many assignments include options for students. For example, one English teacher provided three options for an essay as the final exam, from which students had to choose one to respond to. Students in a physical education class were required (in groups of four) to create a line dance and teach it to the rest of the class. When teaching the dance, students were allowed to choose whether they wanted to teach the whole class at once, or break into four small groups to teach separately, which was viewed as the less intimidating option for some students. In physical education classes, students are given the opportunity to choose between activities such as walking the track or playing frisbee. Upon reviewing samples of student work, many assignments include options for students to choose from. This was frequently in the form of choosing from a list of questions; some assignments allowed students to select the style of activity they wanted

to complete (i.e., write an essay or create a visual representation, such as a poster). In general, it is clear that many teachers provide students with varied opportunities to apply their skills and to demonstrate their understanding of concepts. During classroom observations, some teachers work with individual or small groups of students to address individual learning needs. In one art class, the teacher continuously checked in with individual students to provide oral feedback and to make suggestions, depending on how far along the students were in their completion of the project. During teacher interviews, one teacher explained that he provides students with the opportunity to schedule a conference with him regarding how to improve a major writing assignment to be resubmitted. In some instances, all students were not given the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding. While some English and math classes are co-taught, allowing for collaborative efforts to meaningfully modify resources and assessments to meet student learning needs, many core subject teachers need the professional expertise certified special education teachers are uniquely equipped to provide.

Multiple examples of teachers engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning were observed. Some assignments created by math teachers involved writing analyses. Physical education teachers require students to write creatively and analytically. Music classes provide opportunities for students to utilize technology to create remixes of traditional Christmas songs. There is no evidence that there is school-wide instruction planned around a given theme or that there was a formal emphasis on cross-disciplinary learning. Teachers do not have formal opportunities to collaborate with colleagues across departments.

Students are frequently engaged as active and self-directed learners, mostly in elective courses; they are engaged in hands-on, project-based learning and discovery lessons which challenge their thinking. In elective culinary and art classes, students work on an almost entirely self-directed fashion. Teachers act as facilitators and guides in these classes. One student told about her Spanish class, in which students put on a fashion show using fashion-related vocabulary learned. The demonstrations were enhanced with an oral presentation of a written description about the clothing students were

showing. In a science class, the teacher demonstrated a gas law. After students observed, they were required to explain why what they observed happened. In some cases, teachers missed opportunities to get students involved more actively. The capstone project completed by seniors clearly demonstrates students working independently and actively. While independent research was not observed, some samples of student work showed that students are required to do research based on a self-defined inquiry question. Most of this research is done with the assistance of teachers.

Teachers generally do not emphasize inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking. There was no evidence observed showing that teachers focus students on key themes, concepts and essential questions, spend sufficient time on a unit/theme/topic/essential questions to allow students to understand and pursue the concepts in depth, or regularly ask students to analyze what they have learned, synthesize concepts, compare/contrast, or evaluate. Teachers said that they do base units off essential questions, but students are not generally informed about what the essential questions are. Some teachers do, on the other hand, emphasize skills that extend beyond acquisition of knowledge and skills on Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning. Students are required to do things such as analyze, create, deduce and present.

Teachers at Oxford High School regularly ask students to apply knowledge to other experiences or situations. A physical education teacher took students on a nature walk on a local trail. The senior capstone project requires students to work in a real work environment and to collaborate with local businesspeople. A math teacher was observed assisting students in making real-world connections by clarifying outliers on bell curves by showing what a skewed bell curve would look like if the students' ages and the teacher's age, which would be an outlier, were included on the bell curve. While it was not observed that students are generally required to write for audiences beyond the classroom or share portfolios with parents, sophomores are required to share a portfolio of work to their advisory classes. This portfolio showcases the students' academic successes and pinpoints areas needing improvement.

Some teachers engage students in self-assessment and reflection, but most indicated that they do not do so. When students are required to self-assess, it is usually in the form of comparing their work to a given rubric to determine whether or not they meet the requirements of the assignment. Some teachers indicated that when doing so, many students simply check off that they completed all of the requirements, even if they did not.

In regards to integrating technology, most teachers expressed the opinion that they are lacking in the area of using technology to enhance instruction due to a lack of updated technology. Most teachers have a projector in their classroom, but most do not have SMARTBoards, MOBI software, and/or HoverCams. While voluntary training has been offered to learn how to use different forms of technology in the classroom, most teachers expressed that they do not believe it would be worthwhile to participate in training on how to use and implement various forms of technology since they do not have the technology to use. Some classes regularly and effectively utilize technology to enhance learning; these include computer-aided design and drafting (CADD), digital photography and business classes, for example. When teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, students will benefit through overall improved learning. (small group meetings, Instruction Standard subcommittee, teacher interviews, student shadowing, classroom observations, student work)

Teachers inconsistently adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by using formative assessments, especially during instructional time; strategically differentiating; purposefully organizing group learning activities; and providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom. Some subject areas use pre-assessments to evaluate student learning needs and inform planning. Most teachers use informal formative assessments during instructional time through questioning students for comprehension and recall, as well as by monitoring students as they work independently, such as when researching, completing graphic organizers, and writing. Teachers use these opportunities to provide students

additional, clarifying information. Few teachers were observed using exit slips, thumbs-up/thumbs down, and other strategies, and, when observed, these were used to gauge student understanding and comfort with content.

While teachers provide differentiated support, such as study guides, extra time, and extended due dates for students with IEPs/504s and other students they believe need it, there is little evidence teachers strategically differentiate materials and activities based on analysis of formative assessments. Some students are recommended to the Saturday Academy for additional support; however, many described this as focusing mostly on students who have fallen behind in assignments.

Many teachers purposefully organize groups for learning activities based on student readiness and interests to help students develop understanding of content and skills. Classroom observations and student interviews indicate that much group work is used to divide tasks related to collecting and presenting information. A few teachers use strategic grouping practices to provide students with collaborative opportunities to help individual students develop conceptual understandings.

Students and teachers report that most teachers provide students with extra-help sessions after school and will meet with students about assignments on which they did not do well. Many teachers will offer students opportunities to revise and resubmit work to show improvement in understanding of content and applying skills. Teachers also use understandings of student learning strengths and needs to pair students for in-class activities. When teachers deliberately plan for and use a variety of formative assessments to inform instructional practices, strategic differentiation, purposeful collaborative groupings, and support strategies, students will learn at deep levels, develop stronger skills and conceptual understandings, and begin to take ownership of their learning. (teacher interviews, classroom observations, students, Instruction Standard subcommittee)

Teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices: using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments; examining student work; using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents; examining current research; and engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice to a limited degree. According to the Endicott survey, 72 percent of staff improves their instructional practices by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments. In interviews and small group meetings, most teachers indicated that they do not have regular, formal time to meet to review assessment data/ results with colleagues; however, according to the Endicott survey, 56 percent of staff believes they do have formal opportunities to examine student work to improve their instructional practices. Some teachers do so informally, either during prep time or before or after school. There are currently no professional learning communities, critical friends' groups, or department/faculty meeting time purposefully designed for the review of assessments. While many teachers indicated that they are required to collect data using school-wide rubrics, most said that there is no centralized system with which to aggregate and analyze data. Many teachers did indicate that they examine local assessment data/results with the purpose of modifying teaching practices; however, this is done informally and in the teacher's own time. Most teachers also said that any professional discourse focused on instructional practices usually happens informally, and most teachers do participate in some form of informal discourse regarding instructional practice, whether it be in the faculty lounge or before or after school. In regards to examining student work, teachers do not regularly meet within their content areas and across content areas to look at and discuss student work.

As to using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents, most teachers said that they do not regularly gather feedback from parents and make adjustments in their instruction, if appropriate. According to the Endicott survey, 22 percent of parents believe that teachers have asked them for feedback about their instructional practices. One teacher told of sending out a link to a survey to the parents of his students. Of all the parents, only one parent took the survey.

Most teachers said that the only time parents participate in dialogue regarding feedback is if they see that their child is missing an assignment on PowerSchool. Most parent feedback is in relation to grades only, not the effectiveness of a given assignment or instruction in general. Some teachers did say that they collect feedback from students. Of students who took the Endicott survey, 46 percent believes that their teachers ask for their ideas/opinions to improve how they teach. One teacher told of an end-of-the-year survey students completed to tell the teacher what was effective and what was not. This teacher then utilized this information to inform and modify her instruction for the following year. Another teacher told about allowing students to collaboratively create half of a rubric which would be used to grade a major assignment, based on what they wanted to be graded on; the teacher created the other half of the rubric. This allowed students to take ownership of the assignment and to provide the teacher with feedback regarding what they wanted to be graded on. Finally, another teacher asked his AP students what they felt they needed the most practice on leading up to the AP test. He then tailored the time remaining leading up to the AP test to instruct students on their identified needs based on their feedback. Instructional leaders, for the most part, do not devote departmental (or other) time for teachers to share and discuss instructional improvement. Many teachers indicated that while they are not provided with time to do this formally, they do so informally. For example, the English department meets once weekly on a voluntary basis in order to discuss instructional improvement among other things. The entire department said that they do participate in these voluntary meetings. It is clear that the use of feedback is not accepted as an important part of instructional improvement in the school and it does not permeate the culture of the school; most work related to these areas is done on the teachers' own time, informally and independently.

In the practice of examining current research, most teachers do not do so. While the school does have a professional library, almost none of the teachers utilize it. At a Standard subcommittee meeting, most teachers indicated that if an electronic professional library were available, they would not use it on their own time, but would like to do so in professional development sessions. In general, faculty and department meeting time over the last several years have been used mostly to revise curriculum and

to prepare for the NEASC accreditation visit. One teacher recalled one professional development in recent years in which teachers learned about current best practices. When teachers, individually and collaboratively, analyze data, feedback, and current research on best practices in order to inform instruction, students will benefit through overall improved learning. (small group meetings, Instruction Standard subcommittee, teacher interviews, Endicott survey)

Oxford High School teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, engage in some activities in order to maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices. Seventy-five percent of teachers, 81 percent of students, and 83 percent of staff report that teachers are knowledgeable in their subject areas and classroom observations and teacher interviews confirm this; however, teachers would benefit from support in developing strategies to provide students more ownership of the learning processes beyond recall and understanding.

Teachers report the benefit of sharing effective instructional strategies at formal meetings and state that this happens when possible at monthly department meetings. The English department meets more often, committing non-contracted time, in part to provide opportunities for collegial sharing of new pedagogy when time permits. The math department has been meeting recently to learn about and create performance-based assessments. Some faculty in advanced degree programs, taking individual courses, or attending workshops share new learning about content and pedagogy, usually informally, “often at the copier.” Teachers report that most dedicated professional development time recently has been used to revise curriculum. There is no evidence that teachers have been provided professional development in best practices of curriculum development or aligning instructional strategies to create effective curricular documents. While teachers are required to utilize a curriculum template, instructional strategies are not embedded in the completed documents. Some documents have the section for instructional strategies deleted. The template is not being fully and effectively utilized. Teachers report that they have no input into how professional development time is allocated; however, they hope that the creation of a new professional

development committee will allow them some opportunities to have a voice in the planning of professional development opportunities. When asked, teachers report that they do not have time to read articles or blogs such as those that professional organizations share in news briefs. With increased opportunities for professional development in content-specific pedagogy and for sharing professional learning from outside sources, teachers' will be better equipped to more regularly engage students in meaningful, active, and rigorous learning activities to support them in achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (Endicott survey, instructional leaders, Instruction Standard subcommittee, teacher interviews, classroom observations)

**Commendations:**

1. The teachers' frequent, informal inclusion of real-life connections between students' lives and the content of a lesson
2. The math department's development of a variety of performance task assessments
3. The teachers who provide students with extra help outside of school hours
4. The frequent inclusion of choices for students in both formal and informal assessments
5. The teachers' instructional practices that require students to apply knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, such as the capstone project for seniors, and the Experience Café, particularly in elective courses
6. The teachers' use of flexible and various grouping strategies to support students with different skills and knowledge backgrounds

**Recommendations:**

1. Provide professional development for all teachers in current research and best practices of instructional strategies and curriculum design
2. Provide opportunities for teachers to develop understandings of instructional practices which emphasize use of higher order thinking (analyzing, evaluating, creating), student ownership of learning, and formative assessment strategies

3. Ensure that teachers have formal, regular opportunities to review data in order to inform and modify instruction
4. Ensure all teachers are provided certified support in modifying materials and assessments
5. Provide professional development for all teachers in learning strategies to teach students how to effectively and appropriately self-assess
6. Provide professional development for all teachers to become proficient in the use of technology to enhance instruction and utilize planned BYOD policy to increase variety of formative assessments
7. Use available technology to enhance instructional strategies in the classroom and to ensure equitable access to classroom technology

## Teaching and Learning Standard

# 4

## Assessment of and for Student Learning

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

1. The professional staff continuously employs a formal process, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
2. The school's professional staff communicates:
  - individual student progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to students and their families
  - the school's progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to the school community.
3. Professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.
4. Prior to each unit of study, teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed.
5. Prior to summative assessments, teachers provide students with the corresponding rubrics.
6. In each unit of study, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.
7. Teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments.

8. Teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.
9. Teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.
10. Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, including all of the following:
  - student work
  - common course and common grade-level assessments
  - individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
  - standardized assessments
  - data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions
  - survey data from current students and alumni.
11. Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning.

## Conclusions

The Oxford High School staff has a process in place for all students to be assessed using the school-wide rubrics; however there is no process in place to determine school-wide progress in meeting the expectations set forth in the learning expectations. While the rubrics exist and the process is in place for teachers to assess student work and report the students' achievement of the standards on report cards, teachers use of the rubrics varies depending on the rubric being used, the department in which the rubric is being used, and the teachers' ability to link the rubric to existing assessments in their classes. Although most teachers are aware that they must report on two analytical rubrics, it has not been made clear that all rubrics are to be utilized equally throughout the building. Departments have chosen the rubrics through which they will assess student work, and it is unclear within each department which rubrics are the primary responsibility of which department. In addition, teachers have no vehicle through which to gather data from the school-wide rubric in order to determine if the learning expectations are being met. Teachers are using the rubrics to assess student work, and when there is a process in place to use information to assist in decision-making and to determine whole-school progress toward the school-wide learning expectations then growth towards meeting the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations will be made. (self-study, teacher interviews, student work, building administrative interviews)

Student achievement on individual school-wide rubrics is communicated to families through student report cards, however there is little to no understanding of the purpose or origin of the grade/comment. Although 21<sup>st</sup> century analytical school-wide rubrics are reported on report cards, parents and students have minimal understanding on how the information is used. Parents clearly state that unless the student is below the benchmark, they do not question what the comment means or how it was assessed. The information found on the report card does not clearly express the progress the students are making toward the school's targeted level of achievement of each school's learning expectations. Students express that on the report card there are midterm/final grades and comments and could not make the connection to what the learning expectations

meant to the learning process. The self-study states that teachers at Oxford High School communicate the learning expectations through the use of PowerSchool; however, there is a disconnect for students and parents between what is said and what it is interpreted to mean. Students are asked to identify the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills they will use in completing the capstone project; however, the use of those skills is not assessed according to the final capstone rubric. The school as a whole also does not have the opportunity during the year (annually or at board meetings) in which to share whole-school achievement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. While teachers are using the rubrics, when an understanding about how the assessment is derived and what it is measuring is communicated to students, parents and the community then student and the school's achievements can be identified and improved. (parents, student shadowing, self-study, central office personnel, report card)

There is no formal process in place for teachers to collect, disaggregate, and analyze student assessment data. Teachers do not meet on a regular basis in order to discuss student assessment data and to make instructional changes; therefore, any data discussions happen informally, without a consistent data team process in place and without a school-wide or district team overseeing the process. During interviews, reasons for the lack of a data team process included a lack of common planning time for departments and the inability to use a "data collection software"; however, plans are in place for the creation of data teams and/or common planning time. Data from standardized assessments are not used effectively to make instructional decisions for the school. There is a RTI team in place that identifies students who are in need: school counselors, school psychologist and at times administrators identify students whom teachers informally identify as at risk. Teacher involvement is inconsistent, although there is a form in place that is accessible to all. Parents are usually contacted and are asked to fill out information about at home behaviors to help in the decision-making. Once students are identified at risk, monitoring is the only intervention employed. Another intervention that was linked to the SRBI process is the Saturday Academy that overall is positively viewed from the students' perspective. However, the school lacks true interventions for those students working through the SRBI program. When a

consistent data team process is in place at Oxford High School then teachers' ability to track student academic progress and to determine progress on closing existing achievement gaps will impact student learning. (teacher interviews, self-study, Assessment Standard subcommittee, building administration interview, panel presentation)

There is limited evidence that all teachers communicate the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and/or unit-related learning goals prior to a new unit of study. Through classroom observations it was clear that teachers do not consistently post learning objectives to clarify what the students will be doing in the unit and/or class period. Also, during a variety of teacher interviews there was inconsistency in what is meant by "communicating the expectations of the unit" prior to the start of each unit. Teachers specifically expressed that at the start of the year using their syllabi, they communicate to students what major themes will be addressed but do not collectively provide the students with objectives for each unit of study; however, one exception is that the science department does post and hand out a set of objectives specifically tailored to the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations prior to each unit and continuously refers back to those expectations throughout a unit of study. Also, across each curriculum, content-specific objectives are provided to the special education students. When all departments express objectives of the unit prior to beginning, then the learning expectations or unit goals to be assessed will be clear to students. (teacher interviews, student work, classroom observations)

Teachers at Oxford High School provide students with course-specific requirements and at times the 21<sup>st</sup> century analytical rubrics are utilized on summative assessments. In many courses there are rubrics that are given to students prior to summative assessments and teachers use a variety of ways of making sure all students are aware of the requirements prior to the assessment. Some teachers use only content-based rubrics while others use both content and the analytical rubrics for each assessment. Students state that requirements expected for each summative assessment are communicated differently depending on the course. When all teachers consistently use a content-based

rubric and the school-wide analytical rubrics throughout each department then achievement of learning goals can be readily identified. (teacher interviews, student work, students)

Teachers at Oxford High School employ a variety of assessment strategies. Teachers used a variety of techniques to assess growth within one class setting. Teachers use strategies such as check-in work or a “fast five” which is work to be practiced at the start of class that reflects work from a previous lesson or homework assignment. Also, teachers assess vocabulary acquisition at the start of a unit by assessing how many words the students identify then applying the new vocabulary to sentence writing in context to the new unit of study. Students state that some teachers encourage revision to formal assessments, but this is not utilized throughout each department. While teachers use these assessments, there is no evidence that the assessments are used to inform or change instruction in most instances. When all teachers use a variety of formative and summative assessments to assess students, the information from those assessments will inform instruction consistently throughout the school. (student shadowing, classroom observations, student work)

Teachers collaborate informally and during monthly departments meetings, but no formal process is in place for teacher analysis of assessments. No formal plan on assessment evaluation exists at Oxford High School. Teachers report throughout the school that there is no formal data team process or process for evaluating assessments. Teachers meet once a month after school, but these meetings rarely involve data analysis of assessment. Teachers report that after-school meetings often involve curriculum writing, department information sessions, and other topics, but rarely data work. Teachers report assessment conversations often occur in passing or when time allows. As the school implements a consistent school-wide data team process, consistent collection and analysis of student achievement or review of assessment effectiveness will increase student learning. (teacher interviews, building administrative interviews, self-study)

Teachers provide appropriate and timely feedback to students allowing for revision and improvement of work. Teachers use a variety of formative assessment practices throughout a lesson and unit to assess the short-term progress and at times provide students with the opportunity to revise/resubmit work before formally assessed, specifically in the English courses where the formal writing rubric is used. Also, some teachers provide timely and useful feedback in order to improve skills on specific topics before being formally assessed. The procedure to review the results of summative assessments differs throughout each department. Students express that some teachers will formally review summative assessments before moving on to new concepts and that others require specific, scheduled meeting times to provide specific feedback to the individual student. Allowing students the opportunity to revise work and giving feedback allows students the opportunity to improve and expand their understanding of the content. (student shadowing, classroom observations, teacher interviews, parents)

No formal process is in place for teachers to use assessment data to improve instruction. There is no evidence to support any ongoing process or structure to support teacher use of assessment to revise instruction. Any use of assessment data to make changes to instruction is done individually and informally by teachers, and is not supported by the school leadership with professional development or school-wide data analysis. Teachers use data in order to inform their teacher evaluation goals. When a formal process to use assessment data is in place then improved instruction and school-wide efforts to improve student achievement and instruction will occur. (classroom observations, teacher interviews, self-study)

No formal structure is in place for examining student data at Oxford High School. Data is used in the decision-making process in specific instances and informally by departments. Data from pretests and other information is used for course placement for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Common assessments are used in most departments, mostly in the form of summative assessments such as midterms and final exams; however, analysis of student work occurs informally in departments, with no formal process in place. Data for student achievement on school-wide rubrics is not collected or used in any way. An

SRBI process is being implemented, led by the school psychologist, but data is not used uniformly by teachers in the referral or progress monitoring process. Data on standardized assessments, surveys, or other sources are not used to drive decision-making due to the lack of a school-wide review team or process. The implementation of a school-wide, consistent process for analyzing student work will support teachers establishing specific goals for student achievement and tracking student progress. (teacher interviews, building administration interviews, self-study, Assessment Standard subcommittee)

While school-wide rubrics have been revised, no formal process is in place to continue revisions to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs. Teachers report using the school-wide rubrics for their assessments but needing to modify them to fit with the assessments they are using in their content areas. While the core values and beliefs were consistently seen and heard throughout the school, there was little evidence of students making connections between the core values and beliefs and the school-wide rubrics. Members of departments report finding little value in the school-wide rubrics or find it difficult to relate them to their students. Teachers report needing opportunities to modify the rubrics to make them applicable to their content areas and assessments being used. A revision process is needed in order to ensure teachers have the opportunity to develop the rubrics and create rubrics more relevant to their content. (teacher interviews, classroom observations, self-study)

**Commendations:**

1. The teachers' use of the school-wide rubrics to communicate progress on the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills on the report cards
2. The inclusion of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in the capstone project
3. The teachers' employment of a variety of assessment strategies
4. The specific and timely feedback that is useful in students improving work prior to summative assessments

**Recommendations:**

1. Ensure the professional staff continuously employs a formal process, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess individual student progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
2. Develop and implement a process to assess and communicate the school's progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to the school community
3. Review and revise the reporting process for student achievement of the school's learning expectations to ensure clarity for student and parents
4. Create and implement a school-wide process for teachers to collaboratively collect, disaggregate, and analyze student assessment data
5. Develop a process to analyze data in order to create plans for school-wide improvement initiatives
6. Inform students of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, when they will be assessed, and by what method
7. Create and implement a school-wide process for teachers to create, analyze, and revise assessments using student assessment data
8. Review the school's grading and reporting practices to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs

## Support Standard

# 5

## School Culture and Leadership

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

1. The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.
2. The school is equitable, inclusive, and fosters heterogeneity where every student over the course of the high school experience is enrolled in a minimum of one heterogeneously grouped core course (English/language arts, social studies, math, science, or world languages).
3. There is a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
4. In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff:
  - engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning
  - use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices
  - dedicate formal time to implement professional development
  - apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

5. School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning.
6. The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.
7. Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students.
8. The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.
9. Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.
10. Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning.
11. The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
12. The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school.

## Conclusions

The school community generally builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all. Oxford High School offers programs to increase student involvement and improve school climate and culture. The youth conservation club assists in the clean-up and development of trails in the nearby forest and also assists in planting trees and removing invasive plants in certain community areas. Parents and community members are supportive of unified sports and many general education students are enrolled in the course and participate in after-school activities with unified sports as well.

According to students, other club offerings include chess club, philosophy club, and ballroom dance club. Students may take the initiative to create a new club by getting a form, recruiting other students, and finding an advisor. The B1 club focuses on improving tolerance of differences through programs such as the “spread the word to end a word” school-wide assembly. At this assembly a panel of students and staff speak about challenges they have faced in their lives and how they have been able to overcome these challenges.

Oxford High School offers a variety of elective courses that help students have a positive and respectful outlook in school and in the outside world. The Perspectives on Race course teaches students about diverse populations and partners with Bassick High School in Bridgeport to provide students from both high schools a chance to meet and learn more about their unique perspectives. Elective courses also provide students with the opportunity to display their talents. For example, students’ artwork is posted in school hallways and students enrolled in the culinary classes run a lunchtime cafe for teachers four times a year.

There are options for students to receive academic extra help. Students mentioned the National Honors Society provides peer tutoring during study halls. Many students also

stay after school for extra help from teachers and can attend Saturday Academy to receive more focused assistance on the weekend. Although there are several clubs, extracurricular activities, and sports teams, there are currently no late buses to provide transportation to students who need to stay after school for these activities or extra help. Students and parents are made aware of OHS attendance and behavior expectations via the 2014-2015 parent/student handbook which states, "attendance in school is the primary responsibility of the students and parents." Additionally it notes the Oxford board of education expects, "the highest standards of conduct from all of its students at all times, whether in school, out of school, or at a school sponsored activity." When a school community creates an environment that is safe, positive, respectful, and supportive, students are able to take responsibility for their learning and take pride in their community. (students, teachers, student/parent handbook, school's website)

While every student is enrolled in a heterogeneous class at some point in his or her time at OHS, these opportunities are limited to elective courses, physical education, and advisory and not a core class. Oxford High School offers a variety of courses to meet the needs of its students. Technology education, fine arts, music, and physical education classes are composed of mixed grades and abilities. Each student is also enrolled in an unlevleed advisory class that is organized by grade. The students remain with their group and advisor throughout high school. Core academic classes, however, have levels of college prep and honors. Special education students may receive English and mathematics instruction in a resource room setting, but will participate in general education social studies and science classes with the support of a paraprofessional. All teachers are expected to use the school-wide rubrics to assess student progress. The special education department has attempted to use the rubrics with students receiving special education services, but find the rubric difficult to use with students that typically perform below grade level.

Students are involved in planning their yearly schedules. The program of studies is available to parents and students on the school's webpage. Students meet with guidance counselors a minimum of once per year to select classes for the following year. The

superintendent indicated one of her long term goals for the school is to promote equity and excellence by finding more opportunities for all students to excel and promoting a school culture where all students have access college credit classes such as AP, ECE, and classes articulated with local community colleges. When the school provides opportunities for students to experience heterogeneously grouped core classes, students are able to have challenging learning experiences that help them achieve the school's learning expectations. (teachers, program of studies, guidance department head, classroom observations)

The school frequently provides students with ongoing programming that connects students with adults in the school, who know the students well and assist the students in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Advisory is a school-wide program that meets twice per week. As stated in the self-study, advisories stay intact for four years with the same advisor. During the spring semester of sophomore year, students present work they have collected over their first two years to their advisory peers that demonstrates their ability to perform specific tasks. This sophomore demonstration receives a pass/ fail grade that is counted toward graduation, using a rubric made specifically for this demonstration. According to students, other topics covered during advisory sessions include social issues, current events, and life lessons. Advisory is considered to be a comfortable place where students are able to discuss upcoming events or concerns they may have. However, according to teachers and students, inconsistencies exist around the implementation of advisory curriculum. The senior capstone project is another opportunity for students to make connections with adults in the building and community. According to students, during junior and senior year, students start working on the senior capstone project during advisory period and are provided with a timeline of important due dates for their project, including letters of intent and research papers. Some students are not clear on capstone deadlines and express communication around the experience is inconsistent. Guidance counselors also provide students with an adult they can connect to and feel safe with. According to the guidance department head, students are assigned a guidance counselor when they enter as freshmen based on their last name. Students

remain with the same counselor for four years and meet with their counselor a minimum of one time per year. Counselors are responsible for communicating with parents on academic, social and behavioral concerns. The guidance department teaches lessons once a month for freshmen through juniors. During students' senior year, guidance counselors offer several individual planning sessions to help them transition to post-secondary plans. Students said counselors are readily available to help create transition plans, communicate with colleges, and assist students with completing common application requirements.

According to student council officers, the majority of students are involved in an extracurricular activity including sports, clubs, and honors societies. Each of these activities is assigned a teacher, advisor, or coach with whom students can form relationships, and these activities support the positive school climate. When students are given the opportunity to make connections with adults in the school who facilitate personalized learning, they are able to reach school-wide learning expectations. (students, teachers, administrators, classroom observations, program of studies, school's website, master schedule)

The principal and professional staff has plans for increased professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning within departments and has plans to participate in professional development to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Currently, teachers have opportunities to meet in their individual departments and with the entire staff. According to department heads, departmental staff meetings occur once a month per teacher contract. The topics discussed during department meetings include curriculum revisions, new professional learning, and general school announcements, but the need for more professional discourse about the school-wide rubrics was made evident by the department heads. Whole-school staff meetings are held once a month and led by the building principal or by an appointed staff member. The superintendent indicated an additional staff meeting per month will be added for the 2015-2016 school year. Professional development is offered throughout the school year in various capacities. Teachers have the opportunity to seek out

professional development of their choice. When teachers go to professional development on their own, they often report their new learning back to their department during meetings. In the past, Oxford High School had control of planning the four professional development days at the start of the school year. The superintendent stated she is now planning these professional development days for the 2015-2016 school year, and intends to utilize a portion of that time for professional development related to data collection and data team planning. Staff members note they receive some appropriate professional development, but they stress the need for continued professional experiences to learn how to properly implement the strategies learned in the professional development workshops. When the principal and professional staff make time to engage in professional discourse, receive resources and training, and are given the opportunity to learn how to apply the skills, practices and ideas, they will be able to further improve student learning. (teachers, administrators, superintendent)

School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that occasionally focus on improved student learning. As stated in the self-study, Oxford High School utilizes the SEED Teacher Evaluation system to evaluate teachers and the ProTraxx software to track and assess teacher progress. Department heads are responsible for evaluating the teachers in their department while the assistant principal and principal are responsible for evaluating the support staff and department heads. All evaluators receive intensive SEED training. According to the Oxford Public Schools' 2014 SEED Handbook, teachers are rated in four categories each year. These categories include student growth and development, observation of teacher performance and practice, peer or parent feedback, and whole-school student learning. Discussion related to improved student learning is often the responsibility of department heads based on conversations with the assistant principal, principal, and department heads. According to staff and administration, the focus on improved practices has been curriculum design and revision as well as vertical alignment within departments. There was no evidence collected to support institutional improvements that emanated directly from the formal supervision and evaluation process. A well-implemented teacher evaluation plan will result in conversations around improvement of teaching practices and instructional

improvement. (Oxford Public Schools Adopted Version of the 2014 SEED Handbook, self-study, department heads)

The organization of time during the school week occasionally supports research-based instruction such as inquiry-based instruction, supports the needs of most students in the building, and allows for collaboration within departments. As stated in the self-study, there is currently no common planning time built into the master schedule. Department heads state monthly department meetings are utilized to collaborate within the department. Many times teachers seek out their own collaboration time during lunch periods or after-school hours. Oxford High School employs a modified block schedule that combines traditional class periods three times a week and block periods two times a week. According to teachers, the modified block schedule suits the learning needs of most students and provides teachers time to implement effective instruction. Special education teachers note that the longer block periods can be difficult for some of the students with disabilities. Opportunity for additional practice is offered to students every other Saturday during Saturday Academy. This academy is provided to students for enrichment in mathematics and English/language arts classes. Students are required to sign up with their guidance counselor the week before the academy. At the Saturday Academy there is time for seniors to receive assistance with their capstone projects. When the school creates a schedule to allow for teacher collaboration, interdisciplinary curriculum design, and data review, it will ensure that the school's core values and beliefs about learning are supported. (Statement of Core Values, self-study, master schedule, teachers, students)

Student load and class size enables teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. The average class size varies in both the academic and the specialty elective areas. According to the OHS self-study, most academic classes (English, social studies, science and math) average 24 students, while most elective class sizes ranges from 10-22 students. Social Studies electives, such as Perspectives on Race and Introduction to Psychology often enroll up to 30 students due to the popularity of the class. Some Advanced Placement sections in English, social studies, and science may have 15 or

fewer students, creating the opportunity to provide individual instruction, support, and conferencing. Because of the lab component, science classes are generally capped at 24. Specialized classes such as culinary and foods are capped at 18. Other electives in the applied technologies field are taught in regular classroom settings and average between 22-24 students while fine arts classes can reach 26 students for the Introduction to Art sections. The size of the facility allows physical education classes to be as large as 60 students with two physical education teachers team teaching.

The self-study indicates enrollment projection for Oxford High School in the next two years includes 67 additional students, bringing the Oxford High School total to 663. School leaders project a need to increase staffing within that period to ensure that average class sizes do not exceed 24-25 students. According to staff members the number of employees working at the school has remained consistent from year to year. Small class size allows for individualized feedback for students and allows teachers to personalize learning experiences. (self-study, Culture and Leadership Standard subcommittee, classroom observations)

The principal relies on other building leaders to provide instructional leadership rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. According to building administration, inconsistent leadership at the superintendent level has made it challenging for the district to develop a clear vision in regards to instructional goals. Another challenge presented to the principal is limited administrative staffing. The principal and assistant principal find it challenging, due to time restraints, to provide instructional leadership for teachers and rely heavily on department heads to provide feedback and support to teachers. Teachers express a need for more administrative instructional support, while building administrators express they would like to be able to offer more support in this area but are often overbooked.

Signs throughout the building and daily announcements provide visual and auditory reminders of the core values and beliefs. The core values and beliefs as well as the learning expectations can be found on the school's website. Teachers express although

there are daily reminders stating the core values and beliefs, they feel as if the principal is not visible enough to help enforce the vision clearly on a daily basis for teachers and students.

According to the superintendent and principal, there is an open line of communication between central office and building administration regarding instructional practices, however many teachers express a lack of communication between building administration and teachers in regards to the implementation of appropriate instructional strategies. Teachers and students have a clear understanding of the core values and belief statement, but many are not clear on the academic, civil, and social expectations that go along with the statement. The academic, civil, and social expectations are located on the school's website.

Students are recognized for academic achievement in a variety of forms including awards ceremonies held at the end of the school year for underclassmen and seniors. The National Honors Society offers students a chance to be recognized at the national level for outstanding academic achievement and citizenship. The minimal instructional leadership coming directly from building administrators creates confusion amongst teachers regarding the understanding and implementation of the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations across departments. (assistant principal, principal, superintendent, teacher leaders, school's website, facility tour)

Occasionally teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership. Attempts have been made by the superintendent to get students and parents involved in making decisions and providing feedback. Recently, parents have been invited to open house meetings at central office to discuss concerns and the future of the schools in the district. Students have also been invited by the superintendent to attend board of education meetings. Oxford High School gave parents, students, and teachers the opportunity to provide information and feedback through the Endicott survey. Parents and students are involved in specific extracurricular programs in which they are able to make

decisions. Parents are involved in a booster club to help facilitate sports, band, and a few other student activities through fundraising. Through the student council, students are able to make some decisions about school-wide events and charity fundraising, but most final decisions are made by the administration and information about decisions are disseminated through the organization's advisor and not directly to the students. When teachers, students, and parents are frequently involved in making decisions, they take responsibility and ownership of important decisions. (teachers, students, parents, Endicott survey)

Teachers occasionally exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning. Each department has a department head that conducts teacher evaluations and is responsible for managing curriculum writing and implementation in the classroom. Departments meet at least once per month and the department heads are responsible for planning and running their own meeting. The science department has conducted vertical articulation team meetings with the middle school science teachers to align language/vocabulary used in lab instruction and lab reports. Evidence of vertical alignment is present in the English department as well. Some teachers have suggested they would like to receive more positive feedback from administrators in the area of instruction. Also, some teachers express that it is difficult to implement strategies learned in professional development because often times there are no follow up conversations regarding new learning. The same teachers suggest that instructional guidance or feedback on instruction could be provided by administration during department and school-wide meetings.

The special education department chair, guidance counselors, school psychologist, and social worker serve on the SRBI committee and meet weekly. Revisions are being made to this process at the building and district level. The superintendent and building administration state that this is an area they would like to focus on during the next school year.

Another opportunity for teacher and student leadership includes clubs and extracurricular activities. Teachers and students state they are able to work

collaboratively to introduce new clubs and extracurricular activities to the school community. Students who would like to form a new club may gather members and find a club advisor. The faculty advisor and students work collaboratively to plan meetings and events and communicate with administration regarding ideas for fundraisers and events. Students feel like they have plenty of opportunities for leadership through clubs, sports, and the honor society. The student council faculty advisor indicates that he often assigns different student leaders to plan events so each member gets a chance to plan, organize, and manage events. When teachers exercise initiative and leadership, they are likely to implement solutions to problems and actively to engage in leading curriculum, assessment, and instructional initiatives in the school, ultimately impacting student engagement in learning. (teachers, students, school support staff)

The school board, superintendent, and principal are often collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The board of education provides policies for Oxford High School to follow. Policies are currently being revised for the first time since the 2000 school year and the principal, superintendent, and board of education are working collaboratively on this process. The principal states it is his responsibility to ensure board policies are followed at the building level. Administrators indicate the community and board of education rally around school events, including sports games and arts performances; however the community generally likes the status quo and provide limited funding and support for the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The district administrative council meets once a month to communicate and collaborate on district-wide goals. These meetings are led by the superintendent and administrators from each school in the district attend. The superintendent and principal believe SRBI and data collection/analysis are two areas of need for the school, and they have been collaborating on professional development opportunities for the teachers for the 2015-2016 school year. The Oxford High School self-study indicates the principal and superintendent collaborate to make decisions about curriculum, book approvals, facility operations, hiring of staff, and professional development. This was confirmed by both the superintendent and the principal. Administrators communicate there have been challenges collaborating with the board of

education regarding budgetary needs to help achieve 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The collaboration of the school board, superintendent, and principal are essential to the success of the school achieving the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.

The school board and the current superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. The principal's formal job description indicates he is responsible for reviewing organization and function of the school, and recommends to the superintendent changes that may improve its efficiency and productivity. It is also the principal's job to confer with the superintendent in the process of system-wide goals and to confer with the department chairpersons concerning school-wide goal implementation and progress. The principal and superintendent believe the principal has sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. The board of education is collaborating with the principal to revise board policies for the first time since 2000. Teachers express a need for more instructional leadership and guidance from the principal in order to make sure the whole school is working toward a common vision and goals. Providing the principal with decision-making authority allows the principal to lead the school at the building level, but more frequent and clear communication will allow for a better understanding of expectations for the staff, students, administration, and board of education. (superintendent, principal, board of education, teachers, principal's job description)

**Commendations:**

1. The large variety of extracurricular activities, sports, and clubs that allow students to experience leadership positions
2. The many opportunities for students to form positive relationships with advisors, coaches, and counselors
3. The senior capstone project which provides students another method of forming a positive relationship with an advisor and mentor from the community
4. The hybrid schedule that allows time for varied learning activities during the school week that can meet the needs of all types of students

5. The Saturday Academy which provides the opportunity for students to receive additional assistance with coursework and capstone projects outside of the regular school week in order to enrich their learning experience

**Recommendations:**

1. Create and implement more opportunities to enhance staff teamwork and communication
2. Consider the establishment of a principal's advisory group with direct responsibility for providing input toward instructional leadership, the evaluation process, and curricular coordination
3. Review and revise the master schedule regularly to allow necessary collaborative time for teachers, and develop a formal protocol for collaborative discussions
4. Explore ways for the principal to communicate meaningful feedback to teachers regarding instruction
5. Provide ongoing professional conversations related to the application of skills, practices, and ideas gained from previous professional development
6. Provide regular opportunities for teachers, students, and parents to be a part of a discussion with the principal through some sort of governance
7. Establish formal protocols to guide evaluation conversations toward improved instructional practices and improved student learning
8. Provide clear communication of advisory curriculum expectations for staff and senior capstone deadlines for students

## Support Standard

# 6

## School Resources for Learning

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

1. The school has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students that support each student's achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
2. The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services.
3. Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.
4. School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - deliver a written, developmental program
  - meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling
  - engage in individual and group meetings with all students
  - deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers
  - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.

5. The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - provide preventative health services and direct intervention services
  - use an appropriate referral process
  - conduct ongoing student health assessments
  - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
  
6. Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum
  - provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum
  - ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school
  - are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning
  - Conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
  
7. Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
  - provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students
  - perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.

## Conclusions

Oxford High School makes efforts to have timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and regular education at-risk students that support each student's achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Students and staff members understand that they can approach the guidance counselor, school psychologist, or school social worker, and the support staff person will meet with that student to determine the level of crisis. Follow-up procedures depend on the assessed level of crisis; the support staff person creates an intervention plan and includes relevant stakeholders in assisting the student.

Communication back to the referring personnel is not always timely, although an effort is made to provide that feedback. Teachers can also file an incident form. Oxford High School also has an SRBI committee consisting of the school psychologist, school social worker, guidance counselors, nurse, administrators, and special education department head that meets weekly to discuss at-risk students. In addition, a parent SRBI questionnaire has recently been developed to bring additional information to the SRBI team, although it is not always completed and has just recently been implemented.

While the entire staff has the ability to refer students to the SRBI team through a referral form, the guidance counselors usually are the source of the referral. Teachers report the need for additional professional development to learn strategies for implementing Tier I and Tier II interventions in the classroom, as there are few Tier II or Tier III interventions that can be put in place by the SRBI committee. Oxford High School also provides interventions in the forms of peer tutoring and Saturday Academy, an extra help program facilitated by certified staff, to assist students in improving their academic achievement.

Oxford High School also has an advisory program that meets twice weekly to serve as a proactive intervention strategy for students. Students and teachers report a positive connection as a result of the advisory program. The school social worker and school psychologist also use the advisory time to provide group counseling to at-risk students. Although Oxford High School has interventions in place, there is little evidence of data

collection or formalized analysis of the success of interventions. Without coordinated and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, the school is only partially able to support each student's achievement for the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (self-study, school support staff, teacher interviews)

Oxford High School provides adequate information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services. Oxford High School uses the PowerSchool system to communicate data to students and parents. Parents see upcoming assignments and assessment grades on the PowerSchool in real time. In addition, parents and students report that they often consult the periodically updated website for information, and the school frequently utilizes Naviance and/or PowerSchool to send email updates regarding school- and district-related information. Concerns arise, however, that parents are not reading all of the emailed information because of the large number of emails and attachments on these emails. In addition, the school schedules one "Meet the Teacher" evening as well as one afternoon of parent-teacher conferences. Guidance counselors also communicate concerns about at-risk students. Guidance counselors run a quarterly report to identify all students with D's and F's and call home to alert parents. Guidance counselors and administrators also meet individually with parents and with students in danger of not graduating and. Oxford High School also communicates support services via personal phone calls, an automated call system, televisions throughout the hallways, and daily announcements. The Endicott survey states that 62.9 percent of parents agree that information on support services is communicated to them. If Oxford High School families are not accessing the provided school information then they will be unable to make educated contributions to their children's ability to achieve 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (self-study, Endicott survey, school support staff, parents)

Support services staff employs a range of technology programs to deliver an effective assortment of coordinated services for all students. The guidance department uses Naviance for career, post-secondary, and student success planning and to submit college

application materials on the behalf of students. In addition, PowerSchool is used as a central location to store information about students including Individual Education Plans (IEPs), 504 plans, health information, parent/guardian information, discipline notices, grades, and upcoming assignments. Concerns have been noted regarding the lack of professional development for staff as well as for technological support of PowerSchool, so staff is learning to use the program by trial-and-error or by consulting other colleagues. Also, the LMC uses Destiny (a book automation system), online research tools, and seven online databases; although many students report they are unaware of these systems in the LMC. The LMC has a computer lab for use with whole-class instruction as well as 15 additional desktops available for student use during study halls. The special education department utilizes IEP direct to document IEPs. In addition, educational software programs and five iPads uploaded with particular programs are available to meet the special needs of particular students. Students may also use their own devices if allowed by their IEPs. SMARTBoards are available in some classrooms, and computer labs are available in the school that staff can reserve for use, although many are regularly reserved for classes, thereby making them unavailable for the rest of the student body. With appropriate professional development and readily available access to technology, the support services staff will be able to ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (self-study, School Resources Standard subcommittee, teacher interviews, facility tour)

Oxford High School's counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel but lack adequate support staff. Three guidance counselors serve 602 students at Oxford High School, with two counselors servicing approximately 220 students, and the department head servicing a reduced caseload of approximately 160 utilizing a written, developmental program. Guidance delivers lessons to students on a monthly basis, and all lessons are related to academic and career/college planning and are clearly aligned to the core values and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The use of the advisory period to deliver lessons has improved student contact. During parent, teacher, and student interviews it was evident that guidance is available and responsive to students. Guidance meets individually with students to provide personal, academic,

career, and college counseling. In the Endicott survey, only 22.1 percent of students report that they meet with their school counselor regularly, although individual students report that they meet individually with guidance at minimum once a year to complete an annual conference worksheet. Parents are also specifically invited to attend junior college planning meetings. Counselors lack a secretarial support person, so counselors are required to complete the majority of their own secretarial duties. Similarly, the guidance department lacks the professional development and technical support for the utilization and implementation of PowerSchool, although they are self-instructing. When a student wants to see a guidance counselor, students can sign up on a schedule outside the counselor's office, and students are asked to sign up for their annual meetings. Students who do not sign up are given passes by their counselors for a counselor-scheduled meeting. The counselors supplement meetings that occur during the school day with many evening programs, such as an Introduction to Naviance, College Process Review, and Financial Aid Evening. The Oxford High School social worker and school psychologist assist the guidance counselors in delivering personal-social support to at-risk students identified through the weekly SRBI meetings. The school's counseling department and social workers appropriately deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers. Oxford High School's counseling services also analyze relevant assessment data, such as PSAT, SAT, CAPT, and AP scores to assist students in academic planning. Guidance collects data related to the Student Success Plans (such as learning styles and interest inventories) in Naviance. Seniors complete a survey that reflects upon the overall success of the implementation of the school counseling program throughout their high school career. With appropriate support the school counseling will be better able to deliver the written developmental program and assist students in achieving 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (Endicott survey, self-study, teacher interviews, students, parents, school support staff)

The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel to provide preventative health services and direct intervention services, referrals, and ongoing health assessments. Oxford High School employs one full-time nurse for its 602

students. In the event of an absence, the school nurse makes attempts to secure a substitute nurse; otherwise, the nurses in the district will cross-cover each other. The school nurse is often pulled from her office to attend meetings resulting in no nursing support in the nurse's office, creating an impression that the nurse is infrequently available to students. When the nurse is not in her office, students are instructed to go to the main office. The main office will contact the school nurse via walkie-talkie so the nurse will leave the meeting to attend to the student. The nurse has also created a "grab and go" bag, so when the nurse is contacted for an emergency situation via the walkie-talkie, a member of security or administration will procure the "grab and go" bag so the nurse can go immediately to attend to the student. The school nurse also uses an appropriate referral process. She stays in close contact with the athletic trainer, who informs the nurse via text or email when there is a medical issue that occurs during athletic events. She will also work collaboratively with the guidance counselors to create, manage, and implement health plans and 504 plans. The school nurse speaks individually with families when there is a medical concern and advises the family to meet with the pediatrician, as appropriate. The nurse will also provide families with a list of resources when asked, and she will consult with the district medical advisor for additional referrals, if needed. The school nurse also conducts ongoing student health assessments by reviewing all incoming freshmen and new registrants' medical files. She also reviews the results of the sophomores' state-mandated physicals. She also clears all athletes to practice and participate in sports, which requires her to volunteer time before the start of the school year. The nurse also performs annual hearing, vision, and scoliosis screenings. She educates students on a one-on-one basis, as needed. In addition, the school nurse conducts annual trainings for all staff on Blood-Bourne Pathogens and EpiPen training as well as explaining specific students' medical needs with the students' teachers. In addition, the school nurse participates in surveys from the state of Connecticut; the state-wide results are published and reviewed by the school nurse. The school's health services frequently uses ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (self-study, health services staff, school support staff)

The Oxford High School library/media services are somewhat integrated into the curriculum and instructional practices, and has an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel but is not open to before or after school and is in need of increased support staff. The library media specialist (LMS) is engaged in integrating library/media services into the school's curriculum. Upon arrival in November 2015, the LMS conducted a student and faculty survey to determine the level and types of library usage as well as to determine attitudes, interests, and needs. The feedback from this survey has, and will continue to be used to improve services and to enhance curriculum integration to ensure achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. For example, based on the results of this survey, the LMS has added six desktop computers, four online subscription databases, and has developed and delivered nine library lessons in eight different subject areas. He continues to work toward developing a rapport with faculty to increase and improve the collaborative process. He has requested meetings with department chairs to inform them about available library resources. He has also reached out to classroom teachers to create collaborative lessons. For example, the LMS noticed students working in the media center on a country project. He contacted the classroom teacher, and subsequently delivered instruction to those students in how to use Culturegrams, one of the online databases recently added to the library collection. Unfortunately, when collaborative lessons are conducted in the classroom, the library media center is closed to all other students. The library is also unavailable when the LMS is used for substituting in classrooms. The library media center is not open and accessible to students all day. In addition, the LMS time spent on clerical and/or secretarial library duties reduces the availability of his time to implement his professional responsibilities such as the time to increase and improve curriculum integration. At present, the LMS provides a limited range of materials and technologies to support the school's curriculum. Since his November arrival, the LMS has used multiple sources of data and feedback to make decisions related to library media center enhancements. Reports from Destiny, the library's automated catalogue, faculty and student surveys, and lesson exit surveys, all provide quality information that guide the LMS in making decisions related to improving library/media services. Due to extensive weeding of unused and outdated

print materials, the library collection consists of approximately 5,600 titles including 500 eBooks and a small selection of audio books. This represents an approximate average of nine books per student, which is below average. The LMS is actively acquiring new and applicable curriculum print materials as well as high-interest young adult fiction titles to increase this ratio. All library print materials can be searched online through the Oxford High School media center's website using Destiny. Although tremendous faculty outreach has been conducted by the LMS, many students state they are unaware of how to explore the library's print and electronic resources through Destiny. Also available are seven online subscription databases. Increasing these to include more general and content-specific databases, as well as acquiring subscription Modern Language Association citation tools (such as EasyBib and/or Noodletools), will better prepare students for the college-level research process. All existing library databases can be accessed via the library media center's website. The LMS hopes to add eReaders, if and when a "Bring Your Own" Device (BYOD) policy is implemented as eReaders would be beneficial as an instructional tool in the classroom. In addition, there is a lack of movement toward incorporating 21<sup>st</sup> century emerging learning tools to increase information and media literacy. Although highly interested in doing so, the LMS is restricted due to policy constraints. This would include tools such as Google Apps, cloud-based computing options for document sharing and storage, student email accounts, as well as Web 2.0 tools such as blogs, social networking/media, wikis, online video editing, online surveys and polls. Knowledge in using these tools would increase creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking. The library somewhat supports the independent learning needs of students. Students are able to use the media center and its resources on a first come, first served basis. The number of students allowed per period is based on a pre-determined, maximum, number of students, based on the number of study halls per period. As a result, the library is in need of a procedure that allows media center access based on student need. The media center facility is a welcoming environment. Student work is displayed and books are organized and exhibited to attract interest and increase personal and academic inquiry. An open, circular area encompasses a significant amount of space and is periodically used for large group presentations. For example, the LMS has implemented a new

library event, entitled “Live at the LMC.” Once per month, students are invited to share their talents (singing, poetry reads, comedy skits, etc.) for audiences that consist of study hall students and/or classes. Another beneficial use of this space would be to provide the option for whole class and/or small group collaborative work sessions. Within the library space, students have access to 15 computers in the main area of the facility and a computer lab with 22 computers. There are also three additional computer labs, but many are used by scheduled classes and are often unavailable. For example, the technology lab is unavailable every period of the day during the second marking period making it completely inaccessible by others. Although it was indicated that following SBAC testing, one traveling laptop cart would be available for classroom use, as of yet, this has not occurred. Increasing technology access using personal devices would further reduce technology inaccessibility. When adequate resources are allocated, the library/media services at Oxford High School will be able to increase curriculum and instructional practice integration and meet student needs for achieving the school’s 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (LMS interview, students, classroom observations, school’s website)

Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff. The support services staff collaborates with stakeholders through the SRBI process, co-teaching, and informal referrals from teaching staff. The special education staff provides inclusive learning opportunities by co-teaching inclusion classes in mathematics and English, although teachers express a need for the co-teaching model in social studies and science as well. Paraprofessionals also support students in mainstream core curriculum classes. Special education teachers also instruct “stand alone” self-contained classes in English, mathematics, and life skills, although the need for a math, writing, and study skills lab has been suggested by staff to improve student support. In addition, Oxford High School offers two classes of Unified Sports, which works to partner general education and special education students. A transition coordinator also assists students with special needs with job training. Annual meetings are held to review data (i.e., grades, attendance, and standardized test scores) and to

evaluate the progress and effectiveness of the support services for identified students. The school support services for identified students appropriately support identified students in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (self-study, teacher interviews, Endicott survey)

**Commendations:**

1. The school counseling services that use data to consistently implement a written, developmental curriculum to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling
2. The school communication which disseminates vast amounts of information to students and families
3. The school psychologist and school social worker who work collaboratively with stakeholders to support the social-emotional needs of all students
4. The LMS who is dedicated to increasing collaboration with faculty to meet the needs of all students as seen by increased integration of library/media services as well as by student use of space through developed programs

**Recommendations:**

1. Increase consistency in implementing SRBI Tier I, II, and III intervention strategies for at-risk students as well as increase SRBI professional development for all staff
2. Ensure adequate clerical and secretarial support for the school's counseling services, health services, and library/media services to better meet the needs of the students and ensure all-day access to support staff
3. Increase LMC print, electronic, and technology resources to better support 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
4. Ensure that library media facilities are available before, during and after school
5. Improve the use of the LMC space to accommodate large/small group collaboration, whole-class instruction, independent study, and group meetings

6. Formalize and regularly collect and assess data to evaluate the effectiveness of each student support service area
7. Increase collaborative efforts between special education staff and general education staff to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations of all students



## Community Resources for Learning

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

1. The community and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for:
  - a wide range of school programs and services
  - sufficient professional and support staff
  - ongoing professional development and curriculum revision
  - a full range of technology support
  - sufficient equipment
  - sufficient instructional materials and supplies.
  
2. The school develops, plans, and funds programs:
  - to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant
  - to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment
  - to keep the school clean on a daily basis.
  
3. The community funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses:
  - programs and services
  - enrollment changes and staffing needs
  - facility needs
  - technology
  - capital improvements.
  
4. Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget.

5. The school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services.
6. The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.
7. All professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school.
8. The school develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning.

## Conclusions

The community and district's governing body provides dependable funding for sufficient professional development, for a wide range of programs and services, and for sufficient instructional materials. However, a budget recently cut by \$500,000 is providing only limited funding for professional and support staff, for sufficient equipment, and for technological upgrades. Over the last three years, the budget has seen steady budget cuts, including a significant district-wide budget cut of \$500,000 this previous year. In addition, teachers and department chairs report that the applied technology courses offered in the school will not receive \$20,000 through Perkins Grant funding. The school provides a wide range of programs and services catering to many student interests. Staff and parents report that there are many programs, sports, and clubs offered to students, such as a gay-straight alliance, a feminist club, video game design, connected assembly, unified sports, student council, three honor societies, drama, newspaper, literary club, and youth conservation. Elective class offerings include culinary, finance, shop, family and consumer sciences, technology, and band. The athletic department consists of varsity offerings in cheerleading, football, dance, gymnastics, wrestling, baseball, and softball. Other varsity offerings for both boys and girls are cross-country, soccer, swimming, volleyball, basketball, gymnastics, indoor track, and outdoor track. Teachers and support staff indicate that a Saturday Academy is offered to enhance education or to allow for the completion of make-up work. The school also offers opportunities for trips to engage students and enhance the learning experience, including trips to Europe, Boston, and New York. Plato Online Learning is offered as an intervention. It is a general consensus across the school system that there are a myriad of options for student learning opportunities through engaging programming. There is limited funding for professional and support staff. Teachers, athletic directors, and the custodial staff report that there is only one full-time custodian during the daytime and inadequate staffing at night and for pool maintenance based on a lack of sufficient funding. The staff of secretaries report that they are spread too thin and have varied responsibilities on a daily basis. Teachers highlight the lack of overall curriculum supervision, noting that teachers are responsible for curriculum

development with limited designated time to engage in the process. The need for an attendance officer and dean of students was also noted by teachers and other members of the staff. The technology department reports being spread thin, as there are two staff members responsible for the whole district. In addition, there is a lack of professional development for the staff on technology. On a similar note, the board of education references the need for more professional development in general. Information collected supports the need for technology updates in the school, yet budget allocations in recent years have limited these updates. The budget has only allowed for limited funding for sufficient equipment in the building. The technology department notes that there are only three laptop carts in the building. There is a need for more computer labs. Other equipment needs include a more effective layout for science labs and fume hoods, student lockers that function effectively, more lockers in and around athletic facilities, and more storage. The school provides sufficient instructional materials and supplies. While the district's governing body is able to provide funding for professional development, programs, and instructional materials, until the current budget provides adequate funding to support professional and support staff, sufficient equipment, and technology, students will not be able to achieve the learning expectations set forward by the school community, especially in regards to 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum. (self-study, teacher interviews, panel presentation, facility tour, athletic department meeting, Community Resources for Learning Standard subcommittee, department leaders, technology staff, school support staff, board of education)

Oxford High School adequately funds programs that ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant with limited long-term planning. Limited long-term planning for maintenance and equipment is insufficient. The school's use of the School Dude program and paper logs allows for regular upkeep of the facility. Thus far, the school has replaced or repaired the vast majority of facility issues that have been faced by the school in a short period of time. The facility on the whole is still relatively new and up to date; however, few long-term plans exist to handle major issues or school growth in the future. This is a major concern. Other issues in the space include multiple cracks in the building, heating issues in some of the rooms, transformers not adequately

matching the size of the generator, and a sewage smell that pervades many of the lower classrooms. Overall, the view of the staff and faculty is that the school is clean and healthy. Though the custodial staff does an adequate job of keeping the facilities cleaned and maintained, large after-school events involving high school members and community members spread the custodial resources thin, preventing exemplary upkeep and maintenance. Only one custodian works during days, with no specialists focusing on the pool. The responsibilities of the members of the janitorial staff are clear, along with the procedure to send information up to district planning. Given the size and physical condition of the relatively new Oxford High School facility, the general consensus of the faculty, staff, students and parents is that the services provided by the maintenance department are adequate to meet student needs and to provide for a safe and clean learning environment that allows for students to accomplish their 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and to take pride in their school. Limited long-term planning may affect student learning and health in the future. (facility tour, Community Resources for Learning Standard subcommittee, teacher interviews, self-study)

Oxford High School has limited long-term planning in regards to the expansion of programs and services, enrollment changes, facility needs, and technology. However, plans are in place for capital improvements in regards to security. The school does not have adequate, explicit long-term plans for programs and services according to the department chairs. There are few long-term plans to accommodate facility concerns and little to no planning for technological upgrades. Funding has been requested in regards to some maintenance concerns such as window sealing, painting, and athletic field repair. The plans in place for capital improvements, such as those involving security concerns are rare, although they are currently being implemented and funded at \$18,000 for current upgrades, and another proposed \$22,000 for further improvements.

Although stakeholders agree that there are areas in need of improvement, support for funding is a concern for these areas, especially with regards to the instability of the superintendent position. There was no evidence found for procedures to create or revise long term planning. The community appears to fund projects that they find appealing such as athletics, honors classes, and Advanced Placement classes, rather than taking

into account the judgment of building staff. Although the school is limited in its use of long-term planning, it implements short-term plans focused on immediate building repair, athletics, programming and extracurricular activities regularly. Although plans exist for short-term changes, until adequate long-term planning is conducted with the support of sufficient budget allocations, the school risks failing to adapt to the future needs of students in regards to their 21<sup>st</sup> century learning goals. (self-study, technology staff, facility tour, department leaders)

The faculty and building administrators are minimally involved in the development and implementation of the budget at Oxford High School with limited, untimely communication about the status of the budget from the district. The process for creating a school budget, although involving faculty, department heads, and building administration in the process of acquiring resources from the budget, it is not an effective process. To acquire resources, teachers are given a week to create a prospective list of equipment and resources without knowledge of current budgetary allowances or long-term planning, and are recommended to keep the list reasonable rather than considering what is appropriate to implementing a 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum. Concrete data about budgetary constraints would better inform decisions by faculty in the creation of these resource lists. The list is submitted to department heads who compile and edit the list of items and submit it to the principal during individual meetings in which each line item is justified. The principal adds in the budget for the athletic director and forwards the list to the superintendent who has an administrative meeting about line items and where cuts can be made. Currently, the superintendent has the final say in what initial cuts will be made. The board of education then approves the budget or makes further cuts. The board of finance then has an opportunity to approve or to make further cuts. Any modifications are sent back to the principal to make suggestions to where money can be saved. The final budget is approved, and supplies are ordered. The principal has some responsibility for budget allocation, but final say is with the superintendent. The principal currently uses Budget Sense to keep better records on school spending and could potentially make better informed decisions on exactly where required budget cuts could be made. Although the principal conveys the information

about budget to the staff and faculty, there are no current forums with which the principal can speak publicly on behalf of the budget and to justify requested funds. The principal and instructional leaders have adequately updated information on budget, although recently this information has been delayed by the late hiring of a new superintendent. Limited involvement from faculty and building administration will cause disparity between budget allocations and the needs of the students in regards to 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (department leaders, teacher interviews, Community Resources for Learning Standards subcommittee)

Oxford High School's site and physical plant for the most part support the delivery of high quality school programs and services. The science labs are an area of weakness in the site with lab workspace being incredibly limiting and fume hoods being poorly placed and hard to access, constraining the delivery of the curriculum. The library media center, although beautiful, is inefficient in its use of space despite being adequately technologically outfitted. The cafeteria is both spacious and properly equipped, including a streamlined process for student checkout and a discreet system for students on free or reduced lunch. The school has more than adequate support of electives such as designated space for gym, culinary, family and consumer science, woodshop, and art. One limitation is a lack of space to accommodate the music program, which is taught frequently in the cafeteria. More importantly, Oxford High School's locker room facilities are inadequate, with poorly designed lockers and a shared varsity locker room between males and females. These inadequate lockers have caused health concerns with infectious diseases such as MRSA and impetigo being passed by students sharing lockers. Another concern is the improper functioning of academic lockers in hallways, which often fail to latch and lock appropriately, increasing the opportunity for theft. The failure to latch also indirectly causes damage and wear as students frequently slam or kick lockers closed. The facility includes support for a diverse set of athletics including baseball, football, soccer, volleyball, wrestling, lacrosse, track, and gymnastics among others. However, pole vault mats and high jump mats are needed to fully outfit the track and field program and allow for the safe hosting of home meets. The number of classrooms at Oxford High School is barely adequate and partially underutilized with

classrooms such as the woodshop being infrequently used when other teachers struggle to share available classrooms. There is adequate work space for teachers and teacher leaders, although much of it is shared cubicles rather than designated offices or desks for teachers. There is adequate space for administrative offices as well as conference rooms, guidance and a health suite, although some are not conveniently located, including the nurse and the experience cafe. The outdoor space is more than adequate in terms of parking, proper lighting, grounds maintenance equipment, and an impressive track and turf field. Because the school is relatively new, few renovations were needed or implemented. Although there are deficiencies in regards to athletic space, classroom space, storage, and science lab workspace, the vast majority of the physical plant appropriately supports all programs and services. (teacher interviews, facility tour, Community Resources for Learning Standard subcommittee, athletic department meeting, self-study)

The vast majority of Oxford High School's plant and facilities are in compliance with local fire, health and safety regulations. However, there is concern regarding inequitable accommodations in boys' and girls' locker room facilities. The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations; however, in the boys' and girls' locker rooms, there are an uneven number of showers, which raises concerns regarding equity of available facilities. In addition, there is a shared locker room, referred to as the varsity locker room. There is adequate ventilation, temperature control, and air issues in the building, but findings from the facility tour highlight that there are potential ventilation issues in science storage closets and inconsistent temperatures in the building. The self-study report also notes that there is a history of inconsistent heating/cooling issues in the school. All parts of the building are handicap accessible and the school complies with ADA requirements. In order to address any unsafe conditions or equipment, the school uses the program School Dude to collect work orders. The custodial staff and teachers both noted that the use of School Dude is somewhat effective, but there is no official procedure in place if a work order is missed or if there is no follow through. Information drawn from several sources supports the

notion that security measures, cameras, lighting, parking, and plowing are sufficient. As a result of the Title IX compliance issue, locker room facility issues will continue to cause inequality between boys' and girls' athletic programs. (facility tour, Community Resources for Learning Standard subcommittee, teacher interviews, self-study)

The staff of Oxford High School has adequate, but not extensive engagement with parents and families as partners, with limited evidence of outreach to those families who are less connected with the school. In an effort to engage parents and families as partners in the scholastic lives of their sons and daughters, parents are provided with access to the grading system PowerSchool. Teachers and secretaries report that there are no progress reports provided to students. Teachers update PowerSchool frequently, and over 50 percent of parents are actively engaged in regularly checking PowerSchool, as teachers and secretaries report. In addition, the school has a protocol in place for reaching parents regarding academic issues. Teachers and secretaries mention that if a student's grade drops drastically or below 70 percent, teachers must make attempts to contact parents until they are reached. Emails are used as the main communication method for reaching parents regarding school events and other issues; however, parents noted that not everyone uses their email regularly. Parents and secretaries mention that the school's website could be a good venue for parents to find important information about the school, but highlight that the website is not user friendly and is not updated in a timely fashion. Parents report that overall parent involvement tends to decrease as the year goes on, and most parent involvement is centered on athletics. There is a lack of evidence regarding specific steps to engage less connected parents. Only one report card conference is held during the year, which is scheduled in November. If a parent has concerns, appointments can be made with guidance counselors to discuss a student's education. Additionally, parents can contact teachers regarding academic progress with updated PowerSchool information. There is a lack of evidence showing parent involvement in roundtable presentations of student portfolios, as tutors, or as lecturers in the school. While parent engagement within athletics, regarding PowerSchool usage, and relating to student academic struggle are evident, lack of an updated website, ineffective email correspondence, and lack of a clear plan to reach out to less connected

parents will continue to cause inconsistent involvement in upcoming activities and low investment in academics from non-connected families. (school support staff, Community Resources for Learning Standard subcommittee, school support staff, teacher interviews, parents)

Oxford High School extensively develops and supports productive, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support and enhance authentic and civic learning across the school, despite a lack of consistent parent involvement outside of athletics. Oxford High School has many formal business and industry partnerships that support student learning. Partnerships with Sikorsky Federal Credit Union the medical internship program, a student NASA program, and Breast Cancer Awareness affiliated with Griffin Hospital provide for some of the many examples of opportunities students have to enhance their learning outside of the classroom. These and other partnerships allow for internship experience and other real-world practical application of their learning in the classroom. Parents, teachers, and the board of education report that there is no PTO/PTA in place for parents to serve on to support the school's educational needs. The creation of such a board would allow for greater agency amongst community stakeholders. However, students and parents volunteer for the yearly Pow-Wow and Alaska Day held at Center School. Students make set and concert decorations for Oxford Center School, Great Oak Middle School, and Oxford High School. The HOPE Club provides dinners for the homeless. The Culinary and Bake students make a variety of items to feed The Spooner House residents and OHS sponsors the collection of personal hygiene items, hats, gloves, and toys for the Birmingham Group. Monies are raised for a Kids Walk, the Penguin Plunge for Special Olympics, and the American Heart Association. Regarding higher education connections/partnerships, Oxford High School offers nine Advanced Placement courses. The highest level Spanish course is an Early College Experience (ECE) course, which affords faculty members the opportunity to become UConn adjunct faculty members. In addition, the school allows for meetings with College Board consultants to occur yearly. There is a lack of evidence supporting the inclusion of conversations about how the high school can improve curriculum and instruction in order to better prepare students to be successful in college. There is no

program in which staff can take higher education courses. By creating opportunities for paid and unpaid internships and community service, Oxford High School better prepares students to take an active role in their life as a productive member of society. The school also has infrequent collaboration with district middle schools. The interaction between middle and high schools involves a guidance counselor visit to middle schools, an aligned Algebra 1 curriculum, continuity of Student Success Plans, and occasional capstone presentations or involvement with middle school students. Both learning institutions could benefit from greater collaboration in regards to education and transition, especially with the inclusion of a high school site visit in eighth grade. Students have multiple, exemplary options to partner with community, business, and higher education which enhances their opportunities for advancement of learning outside of the classroom. Insufficient parent involvement in decision-making does not allow for inclusion of the values and agency of stakeholders beyond staff and students. (self-study, Community Resources for Learning Standard subcommittee, teacher interviews, department leaders, parents, athletic department meeting)

**Commendations:**

1. The diverse, high quality program offerings including electives, athletics, and clubs
2. The multiple authentic partnership opportunities with local business, charities, and volunteer organizations
3. The high quality academic facility containing designated space for a number of specialty classes
4. The high quality athletic facility and grounds including a new track and turf field

**Recommendations:**

1. Ensure compliance with all federal and state regulations regarding facilities

2. Ensure adequate funding for sufficient professional and support staffing as well as full range of technology support
3. Develop and implement long-range plans for facility maintenance, programs and services, technological updates, and student growth including a process for yearly review and revision
4. Provide adequate and consistent oversight and implementation of disciplinary practices and attendance
5. Provide adequate technological resources and guidelines for student learning, as well as professional development for teacher implementation.
6. Ensure adequate custodial resources to keep all areas of the school clean and maintain the facilities during extracurricular activities and during the school day, including pool facilities
7. Provide adequate resources for the safe and healthy storage of student academic and personal belongings
8. Develop and implement a plan to provide greater storage facilities for faculty and athletics

## **FOLLOW UP RESPOSIBILITIES**

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 Oxford 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 Committee on Public Secondary Schools requires that the evaluation report be made public in accordance with the Committee's Policy on Distribution, Use, and Scope of the Visiting Committee Report.

A school's continued accreditation is based on satisfactory progress implementing valid recommendations of the visiting committee and others identified by the Committee 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 Committee requires that the principal of Oxford 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 Committee 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 Committee 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 Committee on Public Secondary Schools has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Committee within sixty days (60) of occurrence any substantive change which negatively impacts the school's adherence to the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. The report of substantive change must describe the change itself and detail any impact which the change has had on the school's ability to meet the Standards for Accreditation. The Committee's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix. 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 Committee office has current statistical data on the school.

The Committee on Public Secondary Schools 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 Committee'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 Committee staff following the on-site visit.

The visiting committee members wish to extend their thanks for the gracious hospitality shown by the entire Oxford High School community. It is evident that the high school continues to be a source of pride for the entire town.

**Oxford, CT High School**  
**NEASC Accreditation Visit**  
**May 17-20, 2015**  
**Visiting Committee**

<p>Thomas R. Moore, Chair  Wethersfield High School  Wethersfield, CT 06109</p>	<p>Colleen Hardison  Marine Science Magnet High School  Groton, CT 06340</p>
<p>Cathy Sosnowski, Assistant Chair  Torrington Public Schools  Torrington, CT 06790</p>	<p>Sharon Shirley  Branford High School  Branford, CT 06405</p>
<p>Sarah Mallory  Arts at the Capitol Theatre  Willimantic, CT 06226</p>	<p>Anastasia DiFedele-Dutton  Great Path Academy  Manchester, CT 06040</p>
<p>Joanna Dinkle  Naugatuck High School  Naugatuck, CT 06770</p>	<p>Scott Hoffman  Great Path Academy  Manchester, CT 06040</p>
<p>Patty Pires  Berlin High School  Berlin, CT 06037</p>	<p>Jessie Brown  Enfield High School  Enfield, CT 06795</p>
<p>Pam Mudry  Ansonia High School  Ansonia, CT 06401</p>	<p>Melissa Bedard  Enrico Fermi High School  Enfield, CT 06082</p>

<p>Christina Moher Watertown High School Watertown, CT 06795</p> <p>A.J. Scheetz Staples High School Westport, CT 06880</p>	<p>Joseph Daley Hillhouse High School New Haven, CT 06511</p> <p>Edward Keleher East Windsor High School East Windsor, CT 06088</p>
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# NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

## Committee on Public Secondary Schools

### SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

- elimination of fine arts, practical arts and student activities
- diminished upkeep and maintenance of facilities
- significantly decreased funding
- cuts in the level of administrative and supervisory staffing
- cuts in the number of teachers and/or guidance counselors
- grade level responsibilities of the principal
- cuts in the number of support staff
- decreases in student services

- cuts in the educational media staffing
- increases in student enrollment that cannot be accommodated
- takeover by the state
- inordinate user fees
- changes in the student population that warrant program or staffing modification(s) that cannot be accommodated, e.g., the number of special needs students or vocational students or students with limited English proficiency

## Commendations and Recommendations

### Commendations:

1. The student-centered approach to promoting a positive peer culture that is focused upon learning and academics
2. The many and varietal opportunities for community outreach and civic service through volunteer and extended, real-life learning experiences, such as the capstone program
3. The dynamic, collaborative and inclusive process of crafting Oxford High School's Core Values and Beliefs
4. The prominent visibility and audibility of the Oxford High School Core Values and Beliefs statement
5. Evidence of higher order thinking in lessons/student work
6. Willingness of staff to use prep and after school time to complete curriculum units
7. The amount of students participating in co-curricular activities
8. Teachers' frequent, informal inclusion of real-life connections between students' lives and the content of a lesson
9. The math department's development of a variety of performance task assessments
10. Teachers who provide students with extra help outside of school hours
11. The frequent inclusion of choices for students in both formal and informal assessments
12. Teachers' instructional practices that require students to apply knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, such as the capstone project for seniors, and the Experience Café, particularly in elective courses
13. Teachers' use of flexible and various grouping strategies to support students with different skills and knowledge backgrounds

14. Teachers' use of the school-wide rubrics to communicate progress on the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills on the report cards
15. The inclusion of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in the capstone project
16. Teachers' employment of a variety of assessment strategies
17. Specific and timely feedback that is useful in students improving work prior to summative assessments
18. The large variety of extracurricular activities, sports, and clubs that allow students to experience leadership positions
19. The many opportunities for students to form positive relationships with advisors, coaches, and counselors
20. The senior capstone project which provides students another method of forming a positive relationship with an advisor and mentor from the community
21. The hybrid schedule that allows time for varied learning activities during the school week, that can meet the needs of all types of students
22. The Saturday Academy which provides the opportunity for students to receive additional assistance with coursework and capstone projects outside of the regular school week in order to enrich their learning experience
23. School counseling services that use data to consistently implement a written, developmental curriculum to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling.
24. The school communication which disseminates vast amounts of information to students and families.
25. The school psychologist and school social worker who work collaboratively with stakeholders to support the social-emotional needs of all students.
26. The LMS who is dedicated to increasing collaboration with faculty to meet the needs of all students as seen by increased integration of library/media services as well as student use of space through developed programs.
27. The diverse, high-quality program offerings including electives, athletics and clubs
28. The multiple authentic partnership opportunities with local business, charities, and volunteer organizations

29. The high quality academic facility containing designated space for a number of specialty classes
30. The high quality athletic facility and grounds including a new track and turf field

**Recommendations:**

31. Develop and implement analytic rubrics for civic and social learning expectations
32. Create ongoing opportunities for all key stakeholders, such as parents, community members and board members, to become more formally involved in applying the core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to school-wide policies and practices
33. Establish a cohesive connection and thread within learning experiences, rubrics, 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, and core values and beliefs
34. Develop and implement a process to ensure the school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations
35. Develop and implement a process, plan, and timeline for assessment and revision of the core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school community priorities
36. Develop and implement a plan to ensure vertical alignment and curriculum coordination throughout the district
37. Ensure the responsibility for delivery of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations are clearly identified in the appropriate curriculum documents
38. Ensure access to technology in the classroom to allow for the full implementation of the articulated curriculum
39. Provide professional development that ensures linkage of curriculum to 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and tools that align with the school-wide rubrics

40. Ensure consistency in the completion of all curriculum writing through use of the common template
41. Create and implement a plan that ensures that the written curriculum is being taught in the classroom
42. Provide professional development for all teachers in current research and best practices of instructional strategies and curriculum design
43. Provide opportunities for teachers to develop understandings of instructional practices which emphasize use of higher order thinking (analyzing, evaluating, creating), student ownership of learning, and formative assessment strategies
44. Ensure that teachers have formal, regular opportunities to review data in order to inform and modify instruction
45. Ensure all teachers are provided certified support in modifying materials and assessments
46. Provide professional development for all teachers in learning strategies to teach students how to effectively and appropriately self-assess
47. Provide professional development for all teachers to become proficient in the use of technology to enhance instruction and utilize planned BYOD policy to increase variety of formative assessments
48. Use available technology to enhance instructional strategies in the classroom and to ensure equitable access to classroom technology
49. Ensure the professional staff continuously employs a formal process, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess individual student progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
50. Develop and implement a process to assess and communicate the school's progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to the school community
51. Review and revise the reporting process for student achievement of the school's learning expectations to ensure clarity for student and parents
52. Create and implement a school-wide process for teachers to collaboratively collect, disaggregate, and analyze student assessment data

53. Develop a process to analyze data in order to create plans for school-wide improvement initiatives
54. Inform students of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, when they will be assessed, and by what method
55. Create and implement a school-wide process for teachers to create, analyze, and revise assessments using student assessment data
56. Review the school's grading and reporting practices to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs
57. Create and implement more opportunities to enhance staff teamwork and communication
58. Consider the establishment of a principal's advisory group with direct responsibility for providing input toward instructional leadership, the evaluation process, and curricular coordination
59. Review and revise the master schedule regularly to allow necessary collaborative time for teachers, and develop a formal protocol for collaborative discussions
60. Explore ways for the principal to communicate meaningful feedback to teachers regarding instruction
61. Provide ongoing professional conversations related to the application of skills, practices, and ideas gained from previous professional development
62. Provide regular opportunities for teachers, students, and parents to be a part of a discussion with the principal through some sort of governance
63. Establish formal protocols to guide evaluation conversations toward improved instructional practices and improved student learning
64. Provide clear communication of advisory curriculum expectations for staff and senior capstone deadlines for students
65. Increase consistency in implementing SRBI Tier I, II, and III intervention strategies for at-risk students as well as increase SRBI professional development for all staff
66. Ensure adequate clerical and secretarial support for the school's counseling services, health services, and library/media services to better meet the needs of the students and ensure all-day access to support staff

67. Increase LMC print, electronic, and technology resources to better support 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
68. Ensure that library media facilities are available before, during and after school
69. Improve the use of the LMC space to accommodate large/small group collaboration, whole-class instruction, independent study, and group meetings
70. Formalize and regularly collect and assess data to evaluate the effectiveness of each student support service area
71. Increase collaborative efforts between special education staff and general education staff to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations of all students
72. Ensure compliance with all federal and state regulations regarding facilities
73. Ensure adequate funding for sufficient professional and support staffing as well as full range of technology support
74. Develop and implement long-range plans for facility maintenance, programs and services, technological updates, and student growth including a process for yearly review and revision
75. Provide adequate and consistent oversight and implementation of disciplinary practices and attendance
76. Provide adequate technological resources and guidelines for student learning, as well as professional development for teacher implementation.
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