

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

Commission on Public Schools



Commission on Public Schools

**Collaborative Conference Visit Report for
John F. Kennedy High School**

Waterbury, CT

October 25, 2018 - October 26, 2018

Robert Johnston, Principal

School and Community Summary

School and Community Summary

John F. Kennedy High School (commonly called Kennedy High School or KHS) is located in the city of Waterbury, Connecticut, at the junction of Route 8 and Interstate 84, 33 miles southwest of Hartford. John F. Kennedy High School's District Reference is Group I along with Windham, New Britain, New London, New Haven, Bridgeport, and Hartford.

The current population of Waterbury is 109,551, with a median income of \$40,467, and a per capita income of \$25,251. The percentage of families below the poverty level account for 25.1 percent of the community, and the average cost of a home is \$134,500. As of 2017, the current unemployment rate in Waterbury is 9.4 percent, compared to the state rate of 5.7 percent.

The Waterbury School District currently serves a total student population of 18,534. As of February 2018, there are currently 1,257 students enrolled at the school. English is the primary language spoken in 59.2 percent of students' homes, followed by Spanish (39.2 percent) and Albanian (1.6 percent).

In addition to Kennedy High School's population of 1,257, four additional public high schools include a population of 3,556. There are four public middle schools with a population of 3,557, and 20 public elementary schools with a population of 10,149. Twenty-nine percent, 5,466 students, attend non-public schools.

The Waterbury School District is ranked in the lower 30 percent of school districts in the state in terms of per-pupil expenditures and expended \$15,461 per pupil in 2016-2017, compared to a state average expenditure of \$16,579 in 2016-2017. In the 2017 fiscal year, per the 2017-2018 budget, Waterbury has appropriated approximately \$236,851,615 toward local public education from both government grants and location taxation. Local taxation appropriated for public education has accounted for roughly 50 percent of the expenses, or \$119,063,974, with general fund revenue funding the remaining \$117,787,642.

Kennedy High School includes students in grades 9-12, with a current population of 1,257 students: 663 males and 594 females. The school population has remained stable for the last ten years. Kennedy High School hosts a richly diverse cultural population that is 50.7 percent Hispanic or Latino, 22.2 percent Black or African-American, 21.3 percent White, 1.9 percent Asian, and 1.1 percent American Indian, with 2.8 percent of the student population representing two or more races. The Class of 2016 graduation rate was 75.2 percent, an increase of 10.3 percent from 2012 to 2016. The dropout rate has remained the same during this time period at 1 percent.

There are 95 teachers at Kennedy High School, creating a ratio of 14: 1. Individual teachers carry an average load of 110 students, with an average class size of 25. Students attend school 182 days and for a minimum of 982 hours. The daily attendance rate has steadily increased throughout the course of the past three years, increasing to 92 percent.

All freshmen are placed in non-leveled teams concentrating on four core academic areas: English, mathematics, social studies, and science. Students in grades ten through twelve may select classes from four levels: Level 1 (College Ready), Honors, Accelerated (SOAR program), or Advanced Placement classes (if offered). Fifty-four percent of students are enrolled in level 1 or college ready courses, 22 percent in honors, 12 percent in accelerated classes, and 12 percent in Advanced Placement courses. Approximately 21 percent of students receive special education services. Of special note are multiple students who have classes in multiple levels of study. All students are required to take four years of English, three years of social studies (with one year devoted primarily to U.S. History and a half semester devoted to civics). Students are also required to take three years of mathematics, two years of science, two years of health and physical education, and one fine/performing arts course.

Among the class of 2017, 62 percent of graduates attended four-year colleges, with 13 percent enrolling in two-year colleges, 6 percent enrolling in business and technical schools, 15 percent entering the workforce, and 4 percent entering the military.

Kennedy High School has established partnerships with local businesses, including an annual Community Day program, which brings together students, their families, and the community. Student clubs organize and lead community-based events, such as food drives for local shelters, fundraisers, blood drives, winter clothing collections, and walks for cancer.

Kennedy High School has also established effective partnerships with two local institutions of higher education. Juniors and seniors may enroll in college courses for credit free of charge. Through grant monies, the high school's school counselors and Gear Up staff from Naugatuck Valley Community College are working collaboratively to increase the number of students applying to colleges and universities. Kennedy also partners with the Taft School (a private school in Watertown, Connecticut) on The Global Leadership Institute (GLI). GLI is a competitive and rigorous co-curricular program that brings students from Taft and Waterbury public schools together both in and out of the classroom for shared learning and leadership experiences. The program's mission is to develop a generation of global leaders with a genuine concern for world problems, multiple perspectives on global issues, and the knowledge and skills needed to impact worldwide change.

Students are recognized for their accomplishments through the superintendent's and principal's awards, given annually to students in each grade level. Likewise, the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) recognizes students of the month and students of academic achievement for each semester. The school also holds an annual Super Senior dinner and an Awards night that honors students achieving individual achievement in academics as well as outstanding behavior.

Core Values, Beliefs, and Vision of the Graduate

The mission of John F. Kennedy High School is to promote academic excellence, individual opportunities and critical thinking for every student. In collaboration with parents and families and our community, we commit to the following set of core values and beliefs about learning to ensure that each student is prepared for the 21st century.

Our core values include and emphasize:

- Personal Responsibility
- Respect
- Integrity
- Determination
- Excellence

Our beliefs about learning include and develop our instructional practices:

- All students have the potential to achieve.
- All graduates will be college or career ready, and are capable of resolving real world challenges.
- Each student has something unique to offer our school and community.
- Students are diverse learners; therefore, instruction and assessment need to be differentiated, personalized and varied allowing them to become willing and productive thinkers.
- Students need timely, regular and meaningful feedback.
- Students learn best when instruction ensures they are active, self-directed and inquisitive.
- Students learn best when instruction provides opportunities to use appropriate skills within and across disciplines.

- Students learn best when instruction ensures they have equal opportunities to work independently, to reflect on their learning, and to work collaboratively in realistic settings.

Our learning expectations for each student include the following:

- Students will work effectively and productively both individually and collaboratively.
- Students will evaluate information critically, use information accurately from a wide variety of sources and understand the ethical issues surrounding the use of information.
- Students will read, write and communicate effectively.
- Students will be emergent thinkers who demonstrate originality and creativity.
- Students demonstrate respect, responsibility, honesty, and integrity while developing skills and qualities to succeed professionally and personally.

LEARNING CULTURE

Learning Culture

The school provides a safe learning culture that ensures equity and fosters shared values among learners, educators, families, and members of the school community. These shared values drive student learning as well as policy, practice, and decision-making while promoting a spirit of collaboration, shared ownership, pride, leadership, social responsibility, and civic engagement. The school community sets high standards for student learning, fosters a growth mindset, and facilitates continuous school improvement to realize the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.

1. The school community provides a safe, positive, respectful, and inclusive culture that ensures equity and honors diversity in identity and thought.
2. The school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate drive student learning, professional practices, learning support, and the provision and allocation of learning resources.
3. The school community takes collective responsibility for the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional well-being of every student and can demonstrate how each student is known, valued, and connected to the school community.
4. The school community's professional culture demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement through the use of research, collaborative learning, innovation, and reflection.
5. The school's culture promotes intellectual risk taking and personal and professional growth.
6. The school has an inclusive definition of leadership and provides school leaders with the authority and responsibility to improve student learning.
7. The school culture fosters civic engagement and social and personal responsibility.

STUDENT LEARNING

Student Learning

The school has a vision of the graduate that includes the attainment of transferable skills, disciplinary/interdisciplinary knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary to prepare learners for their future. Students are assured consistent learning outcomes through a defined curricular experience and have the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge in a variety of creative ways. Students actively participate in authentic learning experiences while practicing the skills and habits of mind to regularly reflect upon, and take ownership of, their learning.

1. The school has a vision of the graduate that includes the attainment of transferable skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for future success and provides feedback to learners and their families on each learner's progress in achieving this vision.
2. There is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills and integrates the school's vision of the graduate.
3. Curriculum ensures that learners demonstrate a depth of understanding over a breadth of knowledge.
4. Instructional practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student.
5. Students are active learners who have opportunities to lead their own learning.
6. Learners regularly engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills.
7. Learners demonstrate their learning through a variety of assessment strategies that inform classroom instruction and curriculum.
8. Learners have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning, receive corrective feedback, and use this feedback in meaningful ways to support their learning.
9. Learners use technology across all curricular areas to support, enhance, and demonstrate their learning.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

Professional Practices

The school maintains and implements a school improvement/growth plan, organizational practices, and productive community relationships to meet and support student learning needs. Educators engage in ongoing reflection, collaboration, and professional development to improve their practice and examine evidence of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, programs, and services.

1. The school engages all stakeholders in the development and implementation of a school improvement/growth plan, which reflects the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.
2. Educators engage in ongoing reflection, formal and informal collaboration, and professional development to improve student learning and well-being.
3. Educators examine evidence of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, and programs and services.
4. Collaborative structures and processes support coordination and implementation of curriculum.
5. School-wide organizational practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student.
6. Educators develop productive student, family, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support learning.

LEARNING SUPPORT

Learning Support

The school has timely, directed, and coordinated interventions for all students. The school provides targeted supports to meet each student's individual needs, including counseling services, health services, library/information services, and other appropriate support services to assist each student in meeting the school's vision of the graduate.

1. All students receive appropriate intervention strategies to support their academic, social, and emotional success.
2. All students receive counseling services that meet their personal, social, emotional, academic, career, and college counseling needs from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.
3. All students receive health services that ensure their physical and emotional well-being from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.
4. All students receive library/information services that support their learning from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.
5. Identified English Language Learners and students with special needs and 504 plans receive appropriate programs and services that support their learning from adequate, certified/licensed personnel.

LEARNING RESOURCES

Learning Resources

The school has adequate and appropriate time, funding, and facilities to support the realization of its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate. The school and school community provide time, funding, and facilities for student learning and support; teacher collaboration and professional growth; and full implementation of curricular and co-curricular programs in the school. The school has appropriate plans, protocols, and infrastructure in place to ensure consistent delivery of its curriculum, programs, and services.

1. The community and district provide school buildings and facilities that support the delivery of high-quality curriculum, programs, and services.
2. The school/district provides time and financial resources to enable researched-based instruction, professional growth, and the development, implementation, and improvement of school programs and services.
3. The community and the district's governing body provide adequate and dependable funding to fully implement the curriculum, including co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.
4. The school/district has short-term and long-term plans to address the capital and maintenance needs of its building and facilities.
5. The school has infrastructure and protocols in place to ensure effective responses in crisis situations.

Introduction

Introduction

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

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

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

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

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Reflection

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

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

In addition, the professional staff was required to read and vote on Part 2 of the self-reflection to ensure that all voices were heard related to the alignment of the school to the Standards for Accreditation. All professional staff members were expected to participate in the self-reflection process by participating on a committee and in discussion and evidence gathering to support the school's alignment to the Standards.

The Process Used by the Visiting Team

A visiting team of four members was assigned by the Commission on Public Schools to conduct a Collaborative Conference visit to John F. Kennedy High School. The visiting team members spent two days in Waterbury, Connecticut; reviewed the self-reflection documents, which had been prepared for their examination; met with

administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students and parents; and visited classes to determine the degree to which the school aligns with the Committee on Public Secondary Schools' and Public Elementary and Middle Schools' Standards for Accreditation. The team also reviewed the proposed priority areas for the school's growth plan to be developed as part of the Accreditation process.

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

This report of the findings of the visiting team will be forwarded to the Committee on Public Secondary Schools or the Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools, which will make a decision on the Accreditation of John F. Kennedy High School.

Foundational Element Ratings

Foundational Element Ratings

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

Foundational Element 1.1a - Learning Culture

Narrative

Foundational Element 1.1a - Learning Culture

The school community provides a safe environment.

The Kennedy High School community has consciously built a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that supports shared ownership, pride and high expectations for all. Kennedy High School, in accordance with the full-time school resource officer and the Waterbury Police Department, reviews fire drills, lock-down drills, and shelter-in-place drills. In the past few years, numerous additional safety and security features have been added to the school, including new identification badges for all staff members, the locking of exterior doors, and additional interior and exterior security cameras. Furthermore, guidance counselors, social workers, a school psychologist, and a behavior technician are available resources for students. The school-wide advisory program has become a vehicle to address matters relating to personal, social, and civic responsibility. By fostering mutual respect and student responsibility for learning and by providing a safe, positive, and supportive culture, the school community ensures a sense of pride, shared ownership, and high expectations for all.

Rating

Meets

Foundational Element 1.2a - Learning Culture

Narrative

Foundational Element 1.2a - Learning Culture

The school has a written document describing its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.

Kennedy High School engaged in a dynamic and inclusive process informed by current research to reexamine its core values and beliefs about learning. This process enabled the school to revisit and renew its long-term commitment to research-based, values-driven education. While at this time, the school does not have a Vision of the Graduate in place, the recent inclusive work on the core values and beliefs about learning is fertile ground as stakeholders plan future vision development together. The reexamination and updating of the core values and the reaffirmation of its beliefs about learning have served to benefit the entire Kennedy High School community from students to parents and district administrators. The core values and beliefs include and emphasize the behaviors of personal responsibility, respect, integrity, determination, and excellence (as represented by the acronym PRIDE). The school's recently crafted core values and learning expectations also reflect a commitment to respect and inclusion and are displayed in hallways, office spaces, and classrooms. Student handbooks and clear teacher expectations posted in classrooms help support personal responsibility. There are many clubs, activities, athletic teams, and courses in which students convey their evident pride in their school. A large number of students and staff participate in a number of charity and community outreach organizations, events, and programs.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 2.2a - Student Learning

Narrative

Foundational Element 2.2a - Student Learning

There is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments across the school.

There is a not written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments. Kennedy High School does not meet Foundational Element of 2.2a. Most departments are in the process of creating a written curriculum that is in a consistent format as directed by the district's central office. Each department is at a different stage for each course and grade within their department. There is a basic curriculum in place currently for core courses in social studies, English, science, math, and world language, but all do not have a consistent format for all courses in all departments that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills and integrates the school's vision of the graduate. Currently, there is no written curriculum or units of study for elective courses. In the past two years, several administrator and supervisor positions have been eliminated or restructured, significantly impacting curriculum development.

Rating

Does Not Meet the Standard

Foundational Element 3.1a - Professional Practices

Narrative

Foundational Element 3.1a - Professional Practices

The school has a current school improvement/growth plan.

Kennedy High School has a current school improvement/growth plan that includes school-specific goals. The school improvement/growth plan is aligned with the district's improvement plan and reflects the school's individual core values and beliefs. The improvement plan outlines instructional practices and learning expectations for students. Administrators and school data team members use annual data to inform decision-making, and the school's improvement/growth plan is updated yearly. The current school improvement plan focuses on three main areas of concern: academic, school culture, and climate and operations. For each goal, there are objectives that outline the evidence that suggested the need for the goal, the staff actions that will impact the achievement of the goal, how the evidence will be monitored and implemented, and the professional learning/support that is needed.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 4.1a - Learning Support

Narrative

Foundational Elements - 4.1a - Learning Support

The school has intervention strategies designed to support learners.

Kennedy High School has intervention strategies designed to support students. All criteria of Foundational Element 4.1a are evident in this school. The school provides a range of intervention strategies for students and has a process to identify and refer students who need additional assistance.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 5.1a - Learning Resources

Narrative

Foundational Element 5.1a - Learning Resources

The school site and plant support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services.

Kennedy High School implements learning resources that are adequate and provide appropriate time, funding, and facilities to support the realization of the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and future vision of the graduate. There are established elements of this principle that are firmly in place so that the school and school community can provide time, funding, and facilities for student learning and support; teacher collaboration and professional growth and full implementation of curricular and co-curricular programs. Innovative and transformative practices support the school's appropriate plans, protocols, and infrastructure in place to ensure delivery of its curriculum, programs, and services.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Standard 1 - Learning Culture

Narrative

John F. Kennedy High School provides a safe, positive, respectful learning culture that ensures equity and honors diversity in identity and thought. Students and faculty indicate that they feel safe in the building, and parents agree that the procedures in place support a feeling of safety. According to the NEASC survey, 81.5 percent of students feel safe. There are clear emergency protocols in place, including security cameras, an entry-way buzz-in system, walkie-talkies for administrators' communication, a behavioral technician, and a full-time school resource officer (SRO) on campus. Students indicate that fire drills and lockdown procedures are practiced frequently. There is a very positive and respectful relationship between faculty and students in the building, and the respectful nature of the students is celebrated. Students feel a close relationship with teachers, and the NEASC survey corroborates this with 91.2 percent of students reporting teachers treat them with respect, while 88.8 percent of teachers indicate that students are respectful to them as well.

There is an inclusive culture at the school, and the staff encourages and values each student while affording equitable access to a full range of school programs and services. There is an early intervention program (EIP) team that promotes early identification of students with learning gaps and/or social disparities and provides interventions and/or other supports to them. The school has a program called the School of Academic Renown (SOAR) to promote academic excellence, and there is a Talented and Gifted Program (TAG) in place. There are numerous student organizations that help to ensure equity and honor diversity, while including students from all grade levels and ethnic backgrounds, such as the Student Council, Yes Club, Hope Club, Genders and Sexuality Alliance, and The Eagle Flyer, UNICO, and Special Olympics. Students also organize an annual international day to celebrate traditions and cultures from around the world.

The professional staff recently reviewed and revised the school's core values and beliefs about learning, and expectations for learning in anticipation of developing a vision of the graduate. According to the NEASC survey, 82.2 percent of teachers indicate that the core values and beliefs influence the way they teach, while 82.7 percent of students are familiar with them. The new superintendent recently indicated that the district will soon start its work on developing a portrait of the graduate, and the high school administrators and teachers anticipate having representation during this K-12 process to ensure that the school's core values and beliefs about learning align with the portrait. Teachers use school-wide analytic rubrics to measure students' levels of achievement on the expectations for learning, review the results, and submit them to district supervisors. However, student progress on the expectations for learning is not reported to students and parents at this time.

While, according to the NEASC survey, 74.1 percent of teachers believe that their colleagues take responsibility for the academic well-being of all students, not just the students they teach, only 55.1 percent of students and 61.8 percent of parents agree. Nevertheless, there is a bi-monthly advisory period for which school counselors create a curriculum and schedule. Also, the professional staff believes that much of their efficacy in taking collective responsibility for each learner and demonstrating how each student is known is demonstrated through the myriad student organizations in which students participate. The school's clubs include the Art Club, Audio Visual Club, Best Buddies, Chess Club, Computer Club, Eagle Flyer School Newspaper, FIRST Robotics Team, Gender & Sexualities Alliance, HOPE Club, Italian Club, Key Club, Library Club, Mock Trial Team, National Honor Society, PASS, Photography Club, Recycling Club, S.A.V.E. Club, Sign Language Club, Spanish Club, Spirit Squad, Student Council, Student Theater, Urban Dance Team, Video Production Club, Women in Science & Engineering, and Yearbook. According to the NEASC survey, 62.4 percent of students stated that at least one caring adult knows them well, while 67.9 percent of parents agree.

Sources of Evidence

- central office personnel

- facility tour
- NEASC survey
- school leadership
- teachers

Standard 2 - Student Learning

Narrative

Kennedy High School has a set of core values and beliefs that include the attainment of transferable skills, knowledge and understandings, and dispositions. The statement of core values and beliefs emphasizes critical evaluation of information and the ability to read, write, and communicate effectively — all of which are transferable skills. The core values and beliefs statement will provide fertile ground for the development of their vision of the graduate. While the school uses school-wide rubrics for critical thinking and problem-solving, effective communication, effective writing, and reading for and gathering information, there is not a formalized process in place to provide feedback to learners and their families on each learner's progress toward achieving the core values and beliefs. At this time, the school communicates student progress toward developing transferable skills, knowledge and understandings, and dispositions through progress reports and power school access, and, according to the NEASC survey, 54.4 percent of students indicate that they receive feedback about their progress as learners obtaining these skills. Content area departments have each taken responsibility for using the school-wide rubrics for at least one assignment per marking period; however, teachers can not give specific examples of how they communicate individual learner progress with those rubrics to students and families directly.

At this time, there is not a written curriculum that exists in a consistent format for all courses in all departments, although all curricula are in various stages of being revised. Nevertheless, some teachers have emphasized depth over breadth in their courses independent of a written curriculum. In particular, the journalism course affords students the authentic learning experience of contributing to the school newspaper, *The Eagle Flyer*. In addition, students can demonstrate a deep understanding of civic engagement through the Civic Engagement Project. Math teachers, aligning to Common Core State Standards, have students apply real-world situations to mathematical concepts. e.g., using the Pythagorean Theorem to analyze commuter travel times from two adjacent towns. All departments are using the school-wide rubrics to emphasize cross-disciplinary skill development, even if a formalized plan is not currently in place to offer individualized feedback that communicates learner progress in developing the skills delineated in the core values and beliefs.

The school incorporates instructional practices that are designed to meet the needs of each student and offers three levels of instruction, including Advanced Placement, UCONN dual credit, Honors, and College Preparatory, as one means of individualizing instruction. To promote access to learning opportunities, there is an inclusive, open-enrollment process for students who elect to enroll in advanced course offerings in their junior and senior years. In classrooms and student work, there is student choice and organized group learning, which is demonstrated, for example, in the world language classes and in the antiderivatives project for Calculus. The school offers additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom, e.g., alternate assignments in Physical Education, rotating stations of inquiry in reading class based on common-themed readings, and language stems to facilitate conversation in the introductory world language classes. As a tiered intervention strategy, the school offers a tutorial room where students receive additional support in math and English during a study hall or elective period.

The school offers some opportunities for students to engage as active learners who lead their own learning in addition to some opportunities to engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and high order thinking skills. Opportunities to engage as active learners include project-based learning in music whereby students create their own musical compositions. Student work shows that students have opportunities to lead their own learning by delving into personalizing topics of study through presentations they make. In a science class, the teacher has students constructing their own Physics experiment using ramps and different sized blocks to study forces and friction. However, such diverse learning opportunities are not offered equally across all grades and disciplines. Opportunities to engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills are compelled through the new adoptions and alignment to the C3 Framework in social studies classes, the Common Core standards in mathematics, and the Next Generation Science Standards in science. This work is in the beginning stages but ongoing. While, according to the NEASC survey, 48 percent of students agree that projects in classes allow them to learn course material deeply, and 52.6 percent of students agree that teachers emphasize problem-solving in

classes, in many instances, opportunities to delve more deeply into problem-solving and higher order thinking are missed. For instance, while students were afforded the opportunity to engage in a sensory deprivation experiment and had direct, experiential learning with moving around the building deprived of sight, the experience did not serve as a vehicle to engage in follow-up task demanding more cognitive rigor. In the case of several science experiments conducted, students' ability to make connections and grapple with a deeper understanding of scientific concepts were somewhat inhibited by prefabricated or prescribed data collection charts. Business classes have missed an opportunity to take a more authentic learning approach to instruction where students use the software to write a business plan, design a marketing campaign, or work with real-world business case studies rather than relying on a textbook that is outdated and no longer aligns to the current standards of the workplace. Members of the professional staff believe that redesigning tasks to increase the level of cognitive demand required of students and encouraging them to engage in more independence, flexible thinking, and persistence, will serve to augment many of the creative approaches already taking place at the school.

To some extent, learners are afforded opportunities to demonstrate their learning through a variety of assessment strategies and have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning, receive corrective feedback, and use this feedback in meaningful ways. Teachers use common formative assessments at all levels of instruction to ensure consistent and equitable learning opportunities across courses in all levels of instruction. Social studies teachers use common readings from the Federalist Papers to allow students to prepare for a debate in all civics classes. Science teachers are beginning to develop newly designed common assessments to align to the Next Generation Science Standards, and English teachers are using common assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards. All of these serve as diverse examples of summative assessment. The school recognizes a need for further development in employing a variety of formative assessments to inform and differentiate instruction, and they have begun to use the school-wide rubrics as a means of formatively assessing students' development in reading, writing, and presentation skills. The faculty believes that they need to gain a better understanding of how to use the school-wide rubrics more effectively to communicate a better vision for the graduate. Students are not typically afforded multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning, receive corrective feedback, and use it in meaningful ways to support student learning; nevertheless, in a science class, students were provided the opportunity to reflect on the content of their lab report drafts in order to go back in and add additional information to them.

Learners seldom use technology across all curricular areas to support, enhance, and demonstrate their learning. There are two fixed computer labs available to the entire student body of more than 1,200 students. Additionally, there are three mobile laptop carts available for teachers to use in their classrooms, and the two remaining laptop carts are in disrepair. Network use is unreliable because of inconsistent wireless connectivity throughout the school. As a result, students are not afforded consistent use of technology to communicate clearly and creatively. They do not have access to technology that supports, documents, and supplements their learning, and they do not have reliable access to technology to further construct their knowledge, create, and problem-solve.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- department leaders
- NEASC survey
- school leadership
- self-reflection
- student work
- students
- teachers

Standard 3 - Professional Practices

Narrative

Kennedy High School engages stakeholders in the development and implementation of a school improvement/growth plan, which reflects the school's core values, and beliefs about learning and the school's learning expectations for each student. The school currently has a 2017-2018 school improvement/growth plan that is revised regularly by the school leadership team and administration. The school improvement/growth plan is aligned with the district's priorities. Kennedy's school improvement/growth plan is a school-specific version of the Waterbury Public Schools' action plan with specific emphasis on academics, school culture and climate, and operations. While a formalized vision of the graduate has yet to be established by the district, the school's improvement plan aligns with its core values.

The school improvement plan outlines three goals for which the school is focused on improving: 1 - to design and implement a rigorous, aligned, and engaging academic program that allows all students to achieve at high levels.; 2 - to foster a positive learning environment that supports high-quality teaching and learning and engages families and the community as partners in the educational process; and 3 - to create systems and processes that promotes organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

Educators at the school engage in ongoing reflection, formal and informal collaboration, and professional development to improve student learning and well-being. Faculty members are offered varied opportunities to receive both formal and informal feedback on their teaching. Waterbury has adopted their teacher evaluation plan from Connecticut's Educator Evaluation Development model (SEED). Formal evaluations require teacher completion of a written post-observation reflection via the EdReflect platform. This system encourages all teachers to undergo constant reflection on their practices. The NEASC survey indicates that 56 percent of teachers set concrete improvement goals and implement them on a weekly basis. All Freshmen Academy team teachers receive weekly common meeting time, and most grade 9 and 10 teachers take part in weekly instructional data team meetings; however, 68 percent of teachers indicate that they rarely, if ever, are given an opportunity to conduct a peer observation.

Teachers examine evidence of student learning and well-being in a variety of ways to improve the curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, and programs and services. The Early Intervention Program (EIP) meets bimonthly to create a plan to achieve their goal of having at least 75 percent of all freshmen achieve 5 credits. In an effort to collect data on the well-being of students, behavioral discipline data is collected through referrals.

Kennedy High School has 2 full-time social workers, 1 full-time school psychologist, 1 full-time and one part-time (1.5 FTE) speech pathologists, 5 full-time guidance counselors, 1 principal, 3 vice principals, 3 full-time hall monitors, 1 full-time behavioral technician, 1 full-time library/media specialist, 1 full-time nurse, and 1 full-time parent liaison, 15 full-time paraprofessionals, in addition to 93 full-time classroom teachers.

The school neither uses post-secondary data nor individual and school-wide progress data. The counseling department is tracking the students through their first year of post-secondary school, but the data is not being used to inform instruction. Although additional data may be collected through benchmarks assessments given in social studies and math, this data is not readily available for teachers to make adjustments to lessons to ensure they are implementing the school improvement plan through backward design. According to the NEASC survey, 71 percent of teachers use common assessments to assure consistent learning opportunities, but there the data from these assessments are not yet being used to drive instruction. The professional staff believes that they need more structured professional development in order to understand how their current programs and services are affecting student achievement and well-being.

The professional staff sometimes engages in collaborative structures and processes to support the coordination and implementation of the curriculum. According to the NEASC survey, 84 percent of teachers believe they use lessons aligned with the curriculum; 68 percent indicate that they use a consistent curriculum that includes transferable skills; and 65 percent feel that they use consistent curriculum within their department. However, at

this time, there is not a written curriculum that exists in a consistent format for all courses in all departments, although all curricula are in various stages of being revised. The professional staff believes that there are several areas of weakness in the curriculum development process that need additional work, e.g., although the district provides professional development days, the days do not always align with and rarely addresses curriculum development and implementation.

The school has school-wide organizational practices in place designed to meet the learning needs of each student. According to the NEASC survey, 89.8 percent of students find that adults take responsibility for students' academic well-being. There are opportunities for students to take both college prep courses and honors and AP/ECE level courses, which allow open enrollment. The school provides supportive learning environments and practices that are inclusive, and, according to the NEASC survey, 64 percent of teachers believe that students have the opportunity to learn in ways that combine different subjects. All students enroll in elective classes, including students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP). Students work with their school counselors and teachers to reflect on overall performance before moving into new courses. There are opportunities for students to work with peers from diverse ability levels and backgrounds during class time and in after-school activities. There are interventions in place for students who need academic or social-emotional support. A tutoring room is provided each day, during which teachers and students can work together to make up assignments, learn in small groups, or get direct assistance with understanding concepts taught in English or math courses. The EIP team plays a role in the support process and identifies students at-risk academically or social-emotionally.

The professional staff develops student, family, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support learning. The school offers college-level classes through partnerships with Naugatuck Valley Community College and the University of Connecticut. Courses include Introduction to Business, Principles of Marketing, Integrated Automotive Systems, Automotive Electrical Systems, American Studies, Environmental Science, Italian Composition and Conversation I and II, Statistics, and Human Development and Family Studies. The federally-funded Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) program works with students in grades 11 and 12 to ensure college readiness by affording early access to college credit classes, field trips to local colleges and universities, parent/student workshops, small group and individualized support for the college application process, scholarships, and college tuition waivers. Similar services are available through the Upward Bound program, which serves students in grades 9-12. There is a School Governance Council (SGC), and the school has a full-time parent liaison, who assists with student, family, community, and business outreach; organizes events and fundraising; and provides students with opportunities to participate in community service. Despite myriad productive partnerships that support learning, the professional staff is trying to increase parent involvement, seeking ways to expand opportunities for parent-school connections, such as proposing a parent resource center in the school building, where parents and community members could have access to technology, student progress, the parent liaison and regular updates/reminders of community involvement opportunities.

Sources of Evidence

- central office personnel
- classroom observations
- department leaders
- NEASC survey
- school leadership
- teachers

Standard 4 - Learning Support

Narrative

Students receive appropriate intervention strategies to support their academic, social, and emotional success. According to the NEASC survey, 74.1 percent of teachers indicate that their colleagues take responsibility for the academic well-being of the students, while 99.6 percent take responsibility for the social and emotional well-being of the students. Although 55.1 percent of students indicate that teachers take responsibility for student academic well-being, and 45.1 percent believe that the teachers take responsibility for student social and emotional well-being.

A Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports program (PBIS) is used to ameliorate inappropriate behavior and to provide social skills; a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meets to review initial referrals; and an Early Intervention Program (EIP) allows any staff member to identify a student who is not identified as special education or 504 students, but is in need of academic intervention. An Early Intervention Team then evaluates the referral with the administration and attempts to provide academic assistance which has resulted in the creation of a tutoring room. The tutoring room is run daily for one period and is staffed by a math or English teacher as a duty assignment. A check-in/check-out program (CICO) has been instituted and is coordinated by the school's two social workers and other related service staff to provide daily feedback and monitoring for the student.

The State Education Resource Center (SERC) has provided training to some staff in its Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP) to identify behaviors that impact a student's ability to learn. Staff members are trained in Cognitive Behavioral Interventions for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) to address trauma and violence experienced or witnessed by the student.

The school has five guidance counselors, who provide an initial meeting with each student at the beginning of the school year. This is followed by subsequent meetings dependent on the needs of individual students. Counselors use this meeting to assist students with 504 placements to confirm a diagnosis and update support plans.

Kennedy High School has a staff attendance support counselor to monitor school attendance data, collaborate with administration, teachers, guidance, social workers, parent liaison, behavior technician, school nurse, and outside agencies. Contact with parents is made using phone calls, home visits, and scheduled parent meetings. The attendance support counselor confers with staff regarding the appropriateness of referrals such as Connecticut Junior Republic (CJR), Waterbury Youth Services System (WYS), and the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Social workers are charged with creating effective links between school personnel, families, and communities for meeting the psychological, behavioral, academic, and social needs of all students. They are also responsible for designing and implementing interventions for the students for whom they are directly responsible. Their caseloads typically include students with social/emotional and/or behavioral IEP goals and objectives providing building level consultation and intervention. A hearing-impaired specialist assists students in acquiring academic content by using sign language, providing access to hearing devices approved through PPTs, and by making medical recommendations. A certified school psychologist collaborates with educators, parents, and other professionals to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments that strengthen connections between home, school, and the community for all students. The school created the position of behavioral technician to monitor tier 1 student discipline - specifically first-time offenses, dress code, and multiple tardies - by assisting assistant principals in daily discipline referrals and managing peer support as needed.

Special Education Teachers provide a full continuum of special education services designed to meet the needs of students with identified disabilities. A speech pathologist works to assess, diagnose, treat, and help to prevent communication and swallowing disorders for students, individually and in groups. A Talented and Gifted Program (TAG) educator, works with intellectually gifted students. This program operates as a part-time supplementary resource model in which students receive special services approximately three periods per week.

The school leadership team uses state district and school benchmarks and course exams to identify student achievements weaknesses.

Kennedy High School has a 14-member School Governance council comprised of parents, teachers, community leaders, students and the school principal representing all stakeholders in the school community. Also, the school has a parent liaison, who was hired full time to enhance parent to school communication. She is involved in Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA), which is a vital link between the students, school, community and the parents it serves.

Kennedy High School has created a program called School of Academic Renown (SOAR) which is open to students through an application process and intended to create a school within a school. Courses within this program are assigned additional quality points and are designated a level above the honors program. This approach generates a cohesiveness in the students. Homebound instruction is available to students who are unable to attend school for medical and/or mental health reasons for a period of two weeks or longer as diagnosed by a physician, psychiatrist or the Planning and Placement Team. Students receive services that meet the personal, social, emotional, academic, career and college needs from adequate, certified personnel.

The Support for Expecting and Parenting Students intervention program provides support, case management services, and community referrals for expecting and parenting students to help them remain in school. Certified school social workers and the school nurse address topics individually and within a small group setting to include, parenting and life skills, prenatal support; parenting support; parenting education; referrals to community resources as needed; and help with connecting students to resources that will help the student (parent) and her/his child, such as Positive Parenting, Nurturing Families, Birth-to-Three, WIC, SNAP, Catholic Charities/Family Resource Center, Carolyn's Place, Child First, and others.

The school provides a grief/loss group to students who have recently experienced a significant loss in their life.

A certified Registered nurse provides immediate medical assistance and record keeping for the health records of students. She is assisted by a full-time nurse's aide. This is augmented by a floating nurse who rotates between the high school and a nearby middle school. However, this nurse also is required to fill in for any school nurse who may be absent from any district school. The school also provides direct intake for students requiring greater record management by the nursing staff. The nurse attends all PPT and 504 meetings and provides individualized student medications. The nurse also provides individualized instructions for teachers taking specific students on field trips. Kennedy High School is the only district HS that does not have an in-school health clinic. According to the NEASC Faculty survey, 95.1 percent of teachers feel that the nurse is available when students need help; 84.1 percent believe that the nurse effectively supports students' social and emotional well-being; and 92 percent believe the nurse effectively support student's physical well-being.

An association with a private dental office at the school provides a smile builders program twice per year, allowing students with parental requests to receive dental exams and teeth cleaning. Through a contract with a private company JFK provides a physical trainer to the school's athletic department. Apart from the attendance counselor and the behavioral technician, all service providers are certified.

The physical education program goals, content standards, and performance standards have been adapted from national and state standards and the Connecticut State Department of Education's Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework. Students are mandated by the State of Connecticut to attend Substance Abuse Prevention Education (SAP) classes. SAP is an annual 17-day course of study that seeks to help high school students develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to become increasingly resistant to psychosocial influences that promote destructive decisions and drug abuse.

All students receive library/information services that support their learning from adequate, certified/licensed personnel. According to the NEASC survey, 75.4% of parents believe that their children use technology to work together with other students, and 79.8% of students indicate that they use the library/information services to support their learning. There are 68 computers in the facility, and its Wi-Fi router allows students to work in collaborative groups throughout the library/media center. Students use the Connecticut On-Line Library database

for on line research. The library/media specialist maintains a google calendar to coordinate class use of the library/media center computer rooms and actively elicits recommendations from students and faculty for additions to the collection. Students using the library/media center have access to computers, books, and periodicals in the main reading room. While the library/media center effectively supports student learning, it is not open before or after school.

Identified English language learners and students with special needs and 504 plans receive appropriate programs and services that support their learning from adequate, certified/licensed personnel, and, according to the NEASC survey, 82 percent of teachers agree.

Kennedy High School follows the state of Connecticut's ESL/ELL policies and procedures. Eligibility requirements follow a structured process used throughout the district to establish entrance requirements. All parents are required to answer three questions on a Home Language Survey (HLS) when registering at the Family Intake Center or Kennedy High School. This procedure helps the Bilingual Education Office to identify the entrance of students who might be eligible for services and need further assessment. If the HLS survey indicates that the student may have a primary or home language other than English, the student is assessed for English proficiency using the grade-appropriate Language Assessment Scales (LAS) by which all ELL students are assessed annually. Currently, the school has 235 ELL students. Of those 235 ELL students, 60 are bilingual students. There are 90 ESL students and 90 Language Transition Support Services (LTSS) students. There are three full time bilingual education teachers who oversee the program. The school adheres to the State of Connecticut guidelines for Special Education for all students, including ELL students, and accommodations are made for all notifications and procedures at PPTs for all ELL students.

Sources of Evidence

- NEASC survey
- school leadership
- school support staff
- self-reflection
- students
- teacher interview
- teachers

Standard 5 - Learning Resources

Narrative

The John F. Kennedy High School community and the Waterbury school district provide school buildings and facilities that guide and support the delivery of high-quality programs and services. In 2003, a new library/media center was built, and in 2012, an addition was added to the school that houses the world language and science departments as well as a state of the art gymnasium and fitness center. There is a marked difference between the cleanliness of the new building and the original building. The old building is significantly more faded and dirtier than the new. According to the NEASC survey, 40 percent of students believe that the school is not clean and well-maintained. The facilities have appropriate mechanical systems that meet all applicable federal and state laws and are following local fire, health, and safety regulations.

The school is provided with enough time, but limited financial resources, to enable professional growth, and the development, implementation, and improvement of school programs and services. The school has a devoted block of time during the school day organized to support professional collaboration among educators and the learning needs of all students. There is daily common planning time for the grade 9 teams and weekly planning time for some department-based cohorts to review student needs and plan as well as analyze common formative assessments. District-wide resources are allocated for professional development, as well as improvement of instruction using assessment results and current research. However, according to the NEASC survey, 39 percent of teachers indicate there is insufficient funding available for professional development, and 44 percent of teachers indicate insufficient access to the instructional materials used in the classrooms, including textbooks, supplies, equipment, and technology.

The community and the district struggle to provide dependable funding to implement the curriculum, including co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities. The school budget for 2018-2019 is \$116,507 which represents a 25 percent cut from 2016-2017 when the budget was \$155,962. Funding provides for a wide range of school programs and services sufficient for professional and support staff; however, according to the NEASC survey, 44 percent of teachers find that more money is needed for co-curricular learning programs. There is a 14:1 student to teacher ratio. Individual teachers carry an average load of 110 students, with an average class size of 25. Technological support is limited, as the one IT staff member is shared with another school. There are only 3 laptop carts, and neither students nor staff members can depend on the Wi-Fi network as it is unreliable. Business and technology classrooms have functioning computers which were funded through Perkins Grants, but, since textbooks are often out of date, some departments are asked to use outdated software, such as Windows 2010, or to teach Windows 2016 from a textbook that goes no further than 2010. Many other classes are without textbooks altogether and teachers rely on instructional worksheets.

The school has short-term plans to address its capital and maintenance needs and has developed and maintained plans to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and facilities. Scheduled regular maintenance and repair of the building and facilities ensure safe, secure, and adequate building and facilities. Accurate student enrollment projections are difficult to obtain and plan for, due to a continued transient population. Currently, there is no capital improvement plan for the district. The professional staff at the building and district level agree that it would be beneficial for the city to work with the information technology department to prioritize projects and implement multi-year funding plans for information technology systems. Through the District Technology Committee (DTC), technology is integrated into the curriculum and across all subject areas and professional development activities related to technology. The plan is meant to address the upgrade of the primary network backbone equipment, the upgrade of the exchange email server, the purchase of Microsoft Sharepoint Enterprise licenses, and the upgrade and replacement of laptop carts and desktop computers.

Kennedy High School has the infrastructure and protocols in place to deliver effective responses in crisis situations. All visitors to the building are isolated in a vestibule and then routed into the main office, where their identification is held during the duration of their stay in the school. The school maintains protocols to ensure the safety of students, staff, and visitors in the event of an emergency. According to the NEASC survey, 99 percent of teachers understand the policies and procedures for managing a crisis and know what to do when faced with

one. There is a positive working relationship involving emergency protocols between the school and city emergency services personnel. The police department oversees the director of security, whose job it is to coordinate emergency response procedures. The Waterbury Police Department has also begun to orchestrate authentic lockdown drills. The school crisis team meets regularly to review and revise protocols and to debrief with emergency personnel after such drills. There are bi-monthly meetings of the school safety committee to address any ongoing concerns. There are also formal lockdown and shelter in place protocols for the school coordinated by the administration.

Sources of Evidence

- central office personnel
- facility tour
- NEASC survey
- parents
- school leadership
- teachers

Priority Areas

Priority Area

PRIORITY AREA FOR GROWTH #1

Principles of Effective Practice 3.2 - Educators engage in ongoing reflection, formal and informal collaboration, and professional development to improve student learning and well-being and 3.3 - Educators examine evidence of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, and programs and services.

School Response:

The professional staff has limited time and opportunity for ongoing collaborative time, professional development, and evaluation. Time originally created for collaboration is being used by the district for professional development which reduces the opportunity for school-based professional development, and collaboration time. More meaningful, mindful, and individualized opportunities for professionals to grow as teachers would benefit the entire school community.

Team Response:

The team agrees that, once the school can ensure that teachers engage in ongoing reflection, formal and informal collaboration, and professional development to improve student learning and well-being and examine evidence of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, and programs and services, it will also ensure greater alignment to Standard 3 Professional Practices, specifically Principles of Effective Practice 3.2 and 3.3.

Priority Area

PRIORITY AREA FOR GROWTH #2

Foundational Element 2.2a - there is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments and Principle of Effective Practice 2.2 - there is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills and integrates the school's vision of the graduate.

School Response:

The current curriculum is either out of date, non-existent, or not used school-wide. In some cases, there is no written curriculum. Supplemental classroom materials to support curricula being taught are also inadequate and outdated. A written, effective, and taught curriculum is needed for each content area to ensure student growth and success, as well as teacher consistency.

Team Response:

The team agrees that, once the school can ensure that there is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills and integrates the school's vision of the graduate, it will also ensure greater alignment to Standard 2 Student Learning, specifically Principle of Effective Practice 2.2 and Foundational Element 2.2a.

Priority Area

PRIORITY AREA FOR GROWTH #3

Principle of Effective Practice 2.9 - learners use technology across all curricular areas to support, enhance, and demonstrate their learning.

School Response:

The lack of updated technology for students and teachers hinders the creation and delivery of curriculum, adversely affecting student learning. While there are SmartBoards in each room, two computer labs and Google Drive for staff and students, these provide only the bare minimum of technological support for students in the 21st century. Math classrooms have not had new calculators since 2007-2008, many classroom computers are slow and cannot support programs, there are few laptops properly working, and access to computer labs are limited due to only having two. Up to date, properly functioning technology is needed for high student achievement and success.

Team Response:

The team agrees that, once the school can ensure that learners use technology across all curricular areas to support, enhance, and demonstrate their learning, it will also ensure greater alignment to Standard 2 Student Learning, specifically Principle of Effective Practice 2.9.

Priority Area

PRIORITY AREA FOR GROWTH #4

Foundational Element 1.2a - the school has a written document describing its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate and Principle of Effective Practice 1.2 - the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate drive student learning, professional practices, learning support, and the provision and allocation of learning resources.

School Response:

Although all Kennedy High School stakeholders embrace core values and beliefs about learning, as well as a common definition of the demonstration of the learning through the use of school-wide expectations and rubrics, a vision of the graduate is lacking. A common vision among all stakeholders will also help focus professional practices, learning supports, and the allocation of financial and human learning resources to use high yield strategies in order to fully develop a Kennedy High School graduate.

Team Response:

The team agrees that, once the school can ensure that the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate drive student learning, professional practices, learning support, and the provision and allocation of learning resources, it will also ensure greater alignment to Standard 1 Learning Culture, specifically Principle of Effective Practice 1.2 and Foundational Element 1.2a.

Commendations

Commendation

The inclusive culture at the school and the numerous student organizations the help to ensure equity and honor diversity

Commendation

The inclusive leadership and formal and informal collaboration to improve student learning and well-being

Commendation

The teachers' efforts toward meeting the needs of every student in every course and at all levels of instruction

Commendation

The inclusive, open-enrollment process for students who elect to enroll in advanced course offerings

Commendation

The development and implementation of a school improvement/growth plan, which reflects the school's core values

Commendation

The school-wide organizational practices in place that are designed to meet the learning needs of each student

Commendation

The student, family, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support learning, including college-level classes through partnerships with Naugatuck Valley Community College and the University of Connecticut

Commendation

The library/information services that support student learning and allows students to work in collaborative groups throughout the library/media center

Commendation

The services that meet students' personal, social, emotional, academic, career and college needs from adequate, certified personnel

Commendation

The protocols and procedures that are in place to ensure staff and student safety and effective responses in crisis situations

Recommendations

Recommendation

Ensure that student progress on the learning expectations are communicated to students and parents

Recommendation

Ensure learners regularly engage in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills in all courses and all levels of instruction

Recommendation

Ensure that all students are afforded opportunities to demonstrate their learning through a variety of assessment strategies, including formative assessment, and have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning, receive corrective feedback and use this feedback in meaningful ways

Recommendation

Ensure that professional development days are coordinated and planned in a manner that is informed by the articulated needs of teachers at Kennedy High School as well as the judgment of the school's principal

Recommendation

Include the library/media specialist in curriculum design and collaborative lesson planning to help provide a more robust integration of information technology in student learning

Recommendation

Ensure that the library/media center is open before and after school

Recommendation

Ensure that all students use technology across all curricular areas to support, enhance, and demonstrate their learning

Recommendation

Engage in long-range financial planning to address the technological and instructional resources necessary for student success

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

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

The Commission urges school officials to use the results of the Collaborative Conference Report as well as the school's identified priority areas for growth to draft a school growth and improvement plan, and to review and implement the findings of the Self-Reflection and valid recommendations identified in the Collaborative Conference report. An outline of the Follow-Up Program is available in the Commission's Accreditation Handbook, which is available on the Commission's website.

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

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES Commission on Public Schools

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

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

Roster of Team Members

Chair(s)

Chair: Mr. Francis Kennedy Jr. - New England Association of Schools & Colleges

Team Members

Mr. Rich Aroian - Southington High School

Ms. Julia Chaffe - Guilford High School

Mr. Richard Priolo - Academy of Information Technology and Engineering