

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

Commission on Public Schools



Commission on Public Schools

**Collaborative Conference Visit Report for
Griswold High School**

Griswold, CT

May 29, 2018 - May 30, 2018

Erin Palonen, Principal

School and Community Summary

School and Community Summary

The Town of Griswold and its borough, Jewett City, are located in southeastern Connecticut along Interstate 395. This highway provides access to eastern Massachusetts and the I-95 corridor to New York. Routes 138 and 164 provide access to Rhode Island and the city of Providence. Griswold occupies thirty-five square miles and the Borough of Jewett City is one square mile. The town has a total population of 11,951.

Griswold was named after the Federalist war governor of Connecticut, Roger Griswold, and was incorporated in October of 1815. The borough of Jewett City was formed in 1895 and includes Main Street, the town hall, Slater library, and several banks and businesses. Two rivers, the Pachaug and the Quinebaug, flow through the town and are responsible for the growth of the textile industry after the Civil War. Two of the largest casinos in the world, Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun, are within close proximity of the town.

The median household income reported for Griswold in 2016 was \$70,015, as compared to the Connecticut average income of \$73,433. There is economic diversity in Griswold. Jewett City has an economic status which is not fairly represented by the median income figure. This area offers affordable housing for lower income families and is in sharp contrast with other parts of Griswold where families with significantly higher income levels reside. Ten percent of district families live below the poverty level, as compared to a state percentage of 12.9. The renting rate in this town among residents below the poverty level is 44.3 percent, as compared to Connecticut at 28.3 percent.

The Town of Griswold's board of education budget for the 2017/2018 school year was passed at \$26,982,909. The education budget encompassing 76 percent of the total town budget for the year. Comparative figures yield a very minimal increase in educational budget over time, with 2016/2017 at \$26,048,442, and 2015/2016 at \$25,488,150. The total projected budget for 2018/2019 yields a zero percent increase at the precise number of this school year, \$26,982,909. Federal monies do not apply towards the general budget. Griswold Public Schools receives federal grants such as Title I, II, III, and IV, IDEA 611 and 619, Preschool Development Grant, and funding for school lunch and breakfast programs.

Griswold Public Schools consists of four schools; Griswold Elementary School, Griswold Middle School, Griswold High School and Griswold Alternative High School. All the schools, with the exception of Griswold Alternative School, are situated on the same campus within walking distance of one another. Griswold Alternative School is located approximately four miles off campus, and services a select population of students with individualized plans. The high school is a tuition school for the bordering towns of Voluntown, Lisbon, Canterbury and Sprague. The students at each of these four public schools have the option of attending Griswold High School as well as other high schools in the area.

Griswold High School includes students in grades 9-12 with the total enrollment of 554 students divided between 267 males and 287 females. This number includes the high school students attending Griswold Alternative School (current enrollment of seventeen). The school population has declined over the last ten years, reported at 807 total students, with 197 of those students from tuition towns, in 2009. The graduation rate for the senior class of 2017 was 99 percent, with an annual dropout rate of 2 percent. The most recent figures for students attending post-secondary education/training from the class of 2017 include 40 percent attended four-year college, 24 percent attended a two-year college, 4 percent attended a certification program, 7 percent entered the military, and 15 percent entered the workforce.

In addition to Griswold High School with a population of 554, Griswold Middle School includes 522 students, and Griswold Elementary School includes 710, for a total of 1786 for the Griswold Public Schools District. The total district population has declined over the last ten years, reported at 2,216. Per pupil expenditures for the 2017/2018 school year are \$14,691, as compared to the state average of \$16,592.

Griswold High School has the following breakdown of identifiable ethnic and racial groups: 79.8 percent white, 7

percent Hispanic, 4 percent Asian American, 3 percent African American, 1 percent Indian American, and 5 percent of students identifying as two or more races and/or ethnicities. In March 2018, the free and reduced lunch figures increased from 27 percent (150) of students to 35 percent (190).

During the 2017/2018 school year, the average number of faculty absences due to illness or personal time was 5 days for a teacher population of 55. The attendance rate of teachers is 96 percent. The attendance rate for students for the 2017/2018 school year was 94.5 percent.

Griswold High School offers rigorous coursework in Advanced Placement (AP), Career College Pathways (CCP) and Early College Experience (ECE) courses. The school partners with local colleges and universities such as Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC), Three Rivers Community College, and the University of Connecticut (UConn) in implementing these opportunities for students in preparation for post-secondary success. Virtual High School and PLATO are online learning programs available to students, as well.

Sacred Heart University (SHU) hosts a branch of their program through Griswold High School. SHU utilizes space within the building for classes in the afternoons, evenings, and on the weekends. This partnership affords adults in the community a reduced rate for coursework through the university. In addition, there is a reduced price afforded to all Griswold Public Schools staff. The university also places interns and student teachers in the school.

The school has students working in jobs throughout the community. Community partnerships include: Walmart, Senior Center, Yurechko's Tree Farm, 1000 Degrees, DEEP Pachaug, Better Val-U, Norwichtown Pet Resort, Advanced Automotive, NAPA, Surrell's Pizza. Students also work in the school in the technology department, library, school store, and custodial department.

There are numerous opportunities to recognize student achievement at Griswold High School. In the spring, there is an awards banquet at which underclassmen are recognized. An academic award is given by every department to the top two students in the freshmen, sophomore, and junior classes. There is a whole school assembly, RISE Pep Rally, in the spring, as well, in which students are recognized for different awards around respect, integrity, service, and endurance. Athletic banquets conclude sports seasons at which student athletes are recognized. Coaches create awards based on individual and team performance. The Parent Advisory Council organizes a bulletin board to acknowledge a variety of school functions and community awards. Student achievement and accolades are also recognized in monthly newsletters, board of education meetings, and honor roll. Students can apply for Tri-M for musical excellence, National Honor Society, and Scholar Athletics.

Annually, all Freshman English courses participate in the Laws of Life Essay Contest. Essays are reviewed by a panel of judges comprised of high school faculty. There is a student recognized from every freshman English class in addition to four superior award recipients. The recipients and their families are invited to attend a program in the auditorium at which the essay's are read and awards are given.

Senior Class Night in June recognizes and awards scholarships to the graduating class. Each year, numerous scholarships are awarded in a broad range of areas. Students are also recognized for community service activities and involvement in the community.

Core Values, Beliefs, and Vision of the Graduate

Mission The community of Griswold Public Schools educates for excellence by empowering students to become compassionate, confident, creative and resourceful members of society.

The Griswold Public Schools:

Core Values

- ensures the physical, social, and emotional safety of students;
- values the contributions and resources of its students, parents, staff, and the community-at-large;
- inspires *all* through learning experiences that are relevant, challenging, and meaningful;
- develops a culture that promotes responsibility, respect, honesty, and integrity;
- welcomes the multiple perspectives of its diverse community based on race, culture, and ethnicity;
- cultivates global perspectives and cultural understandings through world studies and languages;
- advances learning through the relevant use of technology in a digitally connected world;
- ignites a passion for learning that drives students toward postsecondary success.

Vision

The community of Griswold Public Schools excels at education for excellence for all students to be college and/or career ready.

The faculty and staff of Griswold High School provide a safe and accepting atmosphere in which all individuals learn, broaden their horizons, and achieve their full potential. Through the high expectations of a diverse and challenging curriculum, students acquire the knowledge and skills essential to become responsible citizens and productive members of society. In alliance with the community, parents, students and faculty share responsibility for the success of the mission.

Implementation of District Vision and Griswold High School:

Vision of the Griswold Graduate:

The Griswold High School graduate:

1. Will communicate and receive information utilizing, reading, writing, speaking, and/or artistic/creative expression;
2. Will engage in critical thinking and effective problem solving;
3. Will use real-world digital and other research tools to access, evaluate and effectively apply information appropriate for authentic tasks;
4. Will take responsibility in both independent and cooperative learning environments to achieve goals.

GHS Mission & Vision

Civic and Social Expectations for Student Learning

The Griswold High School graduate:

1. Demonstrates respect for all members of the school community;
2. Manages time to meet the demands of academic responsibilities along with social and extracurricular activities;
3. Accepts responsibility for his or her own actions and behavior;
4. Recognizes the importance of social and civic responsibilities to a community;
5. Exhibits an understanding of diverse perspectives and cultures;
6. Understands the importance of physical fitness and healthy lifestyle choices.

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 composed of the professional staff were appointed to supervise the school's self-reflection and Accreditation process. At Griswold High School, a committee of three 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. Griswold 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 either by participating on a committee or by participating 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 three members was assigned by the Commission on Public Schools to conduct a Collaborative Conference visit to Griswold High School. The visiting team members spent two days in Griswold, 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 Griswold High School.

Foundational Element Ratings

Foundational Element Ratings

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

Foundational Element 1.1a - Learning Culture

Narrative

The Griswold High School community deliberately builds and maintains a physically safe environment and policies and processes to ensure the safety of learners and adults. As part of a Griswold Public Schools campus, the school provides students and staff a safe environment, including a student supervisor; a part-time resource officer, who is a retired state trooper; and clear processes for fires, evacuations, and lockdowns with procedures posted in each room. The building features bulletproof treatments for the first floor windows with plans to install the same on the second floor. All doors are locked during the school day, and there is a mechanism in the principal's office to lockdown the building. An on-staff school social worker and school psychologist are available to those in need.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 1.2a - Learning Culture

Narrative

The Griswold High School vision of the graduate statement as part of the school improvement plan drives decisions in all areas. Administrators lead in ways consistent with the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate. Teachers take responsibility for the well-being of all students, and families feel as though at least one adult in the building knows their child well. The bi-annual review of the school improvement plan gives stakeholders the opportunity to reflect on current practices.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 2.2a - Student Learning

Narrative

Griswold High School is currently working to complete curriculum in all courses and departments. This is a work in progress, but the templates include instructional strategies, assessment practices, guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills. Faculty will continue with this process.

Rating

Does Not Meet the Standard

Foundational Element 3.1a - Professional Practices

Narrative

The Griswold High School school improvement plan drives decisions in all areas. Goals are clearly delineated and help inform decision-making in the school. The bi-annual review of the school improvement plan gives stakeholders the opportunity to reflect on current practices.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 4.1a - Learning Support

Narrative

Griswold High School has outlined clear and consistent steps to provide intervention strategies to support learners. Formal processes address a variety of student needs including attendance, behavior, academics, and social-emotional functioning. Procedures in place provide direct guidance in managing the steps necessary for intervention and provide means to identify and refer students in need of assistance.

Rating

Meets the Standard

Foundational Element 5.1a - Learning Resources

Narrative

The school site and plant support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services. The building's physical spaces support the school's variety of courses, program offerings, and support services for students. A committed custodial staff with clear processes and cleaning and maintenance schedules ensures Griswold High School is a clean, well-maintained building on a campus that also holds the middle and elementary schools. The building is secure, locked during the day, has bulletproof safety glass, and is staffed to meet the behavioral, social, emotional, and academic needs of learners, while ensuring their physical safety. The school is compliant with applicable federal and state fire, health, and safety regulations.

Rating

Meets the Standards

Standard 1 - Learning Culture

Narrative

The school community provides a safe, positive, respectful, and inclusive 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 at Griswold High School (GHS) support a feeling of safety. According to the NEASC survey, 89.6 percent of students feel safe. There are clear emergency protocols in place, including security cameras, an entry-way buzz-in system with sally ports, walkie talkies for administrators' communication, and a part-time school resource officer (SRO) on campus most weekdays. Students indicate that fire drills and lockdown procedures are practiced frequently. There is a positive and respectful relationship between faculty and students in the building, and the respectful nature of the students is a point of pride for the teachers. Students furthered this notion, stating that they are close with teachers and that teachers are really understanding whenever something comes up for us. The NEASC survey data corroborated this sentiment, with 92.7 percent of students reporting teachers treat them with respect. Through the NEASC survey, 98.5 percent of teachers indicate that students are respectful to them as well.

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. All staff encourage students to always strive to meet the school's "RISE" expectations, i.e., respect, integrity, service, and endurance. Coursework prepares students for college and careers after graduation. In addition to work study programs and service learning components of courses, there are several opportunities for students to earn college credit while at school. There are also multiple opportunities for students to be involved in a variety of co-curricular activities, including athletics, the careers of our lives (COOL) directions program, the fall play, fitness club, spring musical, board games club, yearbook, scrabble club, National Honor Society, student council, men's choir, women's choir, newspaper club, special Olympics, open court basketball, robotics club, technology student association, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), and GSA (Gay Straight Alliance). The drama program is particularly notable, with over 50 percent of students participating in the production. Students welcome their peers; for instance, regular education students help students needing special education supports during classes. Students state that they rally around each other, and one newer student reported that he felt welcomed by peers when they asked to sit with him on his first day at GHS. The Gay Straight Alliance is well-attended, and teachers were recently trained in gender/sexual identity. Support staff and faculty noted that they work collaboratively and creatively to create an environment in which students feel both supported and respected.

There is a sense of pride at school by all stakeholders, including parents, who state that they are very proud of their small community and happy with the overall environment at Griswold. Students further highlight this, indicating how lovely it is to hold events on campus, such as spirit week, homecoming dances, and proms. Equity among students is important to faculty and administration, and there is a district strategic objective to support student achievement and educational excellence to support the social-emotional, cultural, and personalized needs of students, thereby ensuring that all students receive supports needed to become capable young adults. Students receive these supports through the wolverine enrichment block (WEB), advisory periods at the end of the school day, and through activity time on Fridays. Support staff is consistently available during these times and as needed throughout the school day. However, the faculty has concerns about the equity of student experiences in some courses.

The school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate are in the initial stages of revision and will ultimately be used to drive student learning, professional practices, learning support, and the provision and allocation of learning resources. GHS has several guiding documents, including a habits of mind rubric that is used in conjunction with the vision of the graduate, but school leaders indicate that these documents are several years old and that they need revision. Over 67 percent of students and 79 percent of faculty report they are familiar with the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate on the NEASC survey. However, there is confusion by students, faculty members, and parents about the documents, their inception, and their role in guiding the district and school's work. Teachers feel supported in their work with

curriculum and professional learning, but they are not clear how this work relates to the vision, core values, and beliefs about learning. Stakeholders are asking to be included in the creation and revision of the documents, and that there be clear communication on the same, in order to build common understandings about the direction of GHS and the district.

The school community's professional culture is in the beginning stages of demonstrating a commitment to continuous improvement through the use of research, collaborative learning, innovation, and reflection. The recent inclusion of instructional rounds has also allowed teachers to observe colleagues and reflect on practice. There are professional development days dedicated to giving teachers time to plan curriculum, which has been a major focus for the past several years, but teachers are not currently afforded specifics about the goals and outcomes of the professional development days. Common planning time is sometimes used to write curriculum, and there are regularly scheduled department meetings. One teacher indicated that a course may have a syllabus, but that shared experience is on paper only and that students have different experiences in different sections of the same course. Parents echoed this sentiment, stating that it really depends on the teacher. There is a pervasive belief that curriculum work and professional development are synonymous in the school and district, while the current professional learning structure does not fully ensure that members of the professional staff are given time to collaborate, reflect, and innovate beyond curriculum work.

The school has an inclusive definition of leadership and provides school leaders with the authority and responsibility to improve student learning. The school's administrators have decision-making authority and are supported by central office administrators. The principal meets regularly with central office administrators to discuss current initiatives and the district improvement plan. The school's administrators meet with student leaders to determine needs. Team leaders are supported by GHS administration and are able to offer suggestions and improvements. One faculty member stated that the principal empowers teachers, citing the use of instructional rounds as a non-evaluative way to promote intellectual risk-taking and a growth mindset. Parents are frequently invited to join the parent advisory council. However, more parental participation is needed by the community at GHS, according to the professional staff. Students are supported in taking intellectual risks by frequently asking questions in class, helping each other as needed with their coursework, and through their celebrations of work outside of the classroom.

The school culture fosters civic engagement and personal responsibility by giving students opportunities, including participating in band buddies, student match, GSA, peer tutoring, life skills peer coaching, drama productions, service hours for particular courses, working with the recreation department, and running the school store. Additionally, students have opportunities to take higher-level courses such as Advanced Placement (AP) and University of Connecticut Early College Experience (ECE) courses to earn college credit. There are frequent opportunities for students to become active and pro-social members of the school community, and the professional staff are researching more opportunities, such as a capstone project, so the school can expand student and community engagement.

Sources of Evidence

- central office personnel
- community members
- department leaders
- facility tour
- NEASC survey
- parents
- school leadership
- school support staff
- self-reflection
- students
- teachers

Standard 2 - Student Learning

Narrative

Griswold High School's vision of the graduate indicates the 21st century skills that students are expected to acquire and demonstrate during their high school careers. These skills are grouped into academic, civic, and social expectations. According to the NEASC survey, 88 percent of students and 91 percent of teachers responded that they are familiar with the vision of the graduate; however, when students are directly asked about the vision of the graduate, they indicate that they are not specifically familiar with the document and instead refer to the school's ubiquitously posted RISE expectations: respect, integrity, service, and endurance. There are also a vision and a mission statement that are published on the website, in the parent-student handbook, and the program of studies. In many programs and classrooms, students receive explicit guidance on their work toward achieving elements of the school's vision of the graduate, particularly where school-wide rubrics or measurable criteria for success, are employed; for example, school-wide writing rubrics are used in English and social studies, and the habits of mind are used in career and technical education and business classes. However, clarity concerning how to realize the expectations associated with the vision of the graduate is not yet common and only evident in some classes, departments, or programs. Hence, at this time, not all students consistently receive feedback on their progress in achieving the school's vision. Nevertheless, for coursework grades, the school uses PlusPortals, an online grade book that allows parents and students access at any time.

Sometimes, students actively participate in authentic learning experiences; for example, in a chorus class, students practiced a musical selection of their choice and assembled in groups based on vocal range of four or five singers in which section leaders guided their peers as they navigated new lyrics. In a family and consumer science class, students staffed all aspects of a restaurant-style, seated luncheon, not only preparing and serving multiple courses, but also providing full wait service to the multiple guests for the duration of the dining experience. However, these instances represent pockets of such opportunities, which are not yet prevalent throughout the school. According to the NEASC survey, 87 percent of students indicate they are afforded opportunities to work with other students on a project during class, while only 48 percent report that they get opportunities to work on a project in the community.

Even though the NEASC survey shows that 97 percent of teachers believe there is a consistent curriculum that is regularly reviewed and revised, this is only the case in a few areas. The school does not have written curriculum that integrates the school's vision of the graduate for all disciplines; as such, there are not written guarantees, via the curriculum, that all students will have the opportunities to regularly demonstrate a depth of understanding in all of their courses. However, in some instances, depth of knowledge levels are consciously embedded in the curriculum that has been written thus far. Project-based learning is limited, but can be seen in certain assignments within courses, e.g., the news project in Spanish 2; laws of life essay in English I; the portfolio in business; and the faculty lunches in family and consumer science. While all departments are using or will soon use a common format that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, most of the courses offered by the school do not yet have a completed curriculum, as this work is just getting underway.

Students sometimes participate as active learners, but seldom have opportunities to lead and take ownership of their their learning. Despite 70 percent of students indicating that teacher will let them engage in an activity such as a role-play, demonstration, debate, or game, the professional staff recognize though their instructional rounds process that many classes are teacher-driven within a direct instruction approach. Teachers often use the white and/or SMART Board to aid their oral explanations of planned content, while frequently asking their classes guiding questions and having students respond aloud at will. This leaves the non-participating, quieter students out of these class conversations, making the process of checking for understanding in a formative manner incomplete. Nevertheless, in a math class, the teacher not only thoroughly checked for understanding, but also afforded students a chance to lead their learning. Once the teacher explained and illustrated equations on the SMART Board, he invited a student to solve the equation on the board. Once the student was found to be correct, the teacher encouraged him to help other members of this section of 12 students. As other students proved that they completed the exercise correctly, they, too, were allowed check their peers' progress, provide feedback, and help them. At one point, a quiet student sitting alone asked, "Since I have it right, too; can I help them now?" After the teacher gave her permission, this student proceeded to help a nearby classmate, looking

over his work in progress, and asking, "Okay, I see this is good, but what are you doing on this part?" Continuing with obvious affection, "Look, let me show you what to do here." While this is only one of two examples of students leading their learning, as was the case in the aforementioned chorus class, it also shows some student reflection and, more significantly, student-to-student feedback, which occurs much more frequently throughout the school. These kind of peer feedback opportunities were observed in the aforementioned chorus and math classes, as well as in some Spanish, English, and graphic design classes.

Students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning, receive corrective feedback, and use this feedback in meaningful ways to support their learning. Eighty-seven percent of students indicate that teachers provide them with timely feedback on their assignments, and 98 percent of teachers agree. While many teachers rely on traditional written feedback on assessments, they also use Google Docs, through which they post comments both during and after students share their documents. Khan Academy provides immediate feedback in math classes. Students can revisit their work and demonstrate improved learning in response to quiz and test corrections. Revision, written comments, writing conferences, peer conferences, and/or online collaborations are employed in English and social studies classes. The wolverine enrichment block (WEB) includes office hours for teachers to meet with students in small groups, and students can work with teachers or peer tutors in discipline-specific centers; however, school observations also showed silent independent work or free time sessions. In addition to student-to-student feedback, teacher-to-student feedback is manifested in summative and formative assessment. Teachers use formative assessments to check for understanding via exit slips, entrance slips, Quizlet, Kahoot, question and answer sessions, and homework. These methods inform future instruction and help remedy obstacles in achieving mastery.

Teachers provide students with opportunities for engaging in inquiry, sharpening problem-solving abilities, and developing higher order thinking skills through myriad course assignments, e.g., the dangerous creations paper in AP/ECE English; Canterbury Tales dinner party project in English IV; document-based question essays in social studies; theorist project and multiple intelligence project in teaching the young child; solar cooker challenge lab and door alarm design lab in physical science; osmosis diffusion lab in biology; scrapbook project in Spanish I; clinicals at local a nursing facility in certified nursing assistants; analyzing data project in statistics; starting an ice cream parlor in introduction to business; individual project design in wood tech II; small engine rebuild project in transportation technology; and ranch-style house plans in CADD III. According to the NEASC survey, all teachers indicate that they emphasize problem-solving; emphasize higher order thinking, not just learning facts; and help students apply their knowledge to real life situations, thereby affording students multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning.

Despite budgetary limitations, students use technology to support, enhance, and demonstrate learning. According to the NEASC survey, 85 percent of students use technology to learn about things in which they are interested, while 92 percent of teachers report that they have access to the technology they need to support student learning. There are several computer labs. Some teachers have class sets of tablets, while others have Chromebooks, providing students with easy access to technology. Teachers use Google Classroom to allow students to supplement, support, and document their learning as well as get feedback on work and collaborate and participate digitally in whole class discussions. Students and teachers use Google Drive, Microsoft Office, Quizlet, Kahoot, Classzone.com, Conjuguemos.com, Khan Academy, Virtual High School, PLATO, Chromebooks, graphing/scientific calculators, SMART Boards and projectors, tablets, and document cameras. Students use Naviance to document their high school careers and plan for college. Through PlusPortals, all students can access their grades, homework assignments, upcoming assessments, and long-term projects. The portal is also visible to parents. All students are assigned Griswold Public Schools email accounts, which enhances communication between students and faculty.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- department leaders
- facility tour
- NEASC survey

- parents
- school leadership
- self-reflection
- students
- teachers

Standard 3 - Professional Practices

Narrative

The school engages some 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. The plan includes specific strategic objectives such as revising curriculum and assessments, focusing on best instructional practices, using student performance data to target interventions, and cultivating an inclusive culture. Parents and students were not part of the creation of the school improvement plan, and these stakeholders are interested in being involved in the school improvement process.

Teachers engage in ongoing reflection, formal and informal collaboration, and professional development. However, most of the time reserved for teacher collaboration and learning is spent writing curriculum or planning for classes. There have been two vertical teams created this past year to examine curriculum shifts in both English and social studies. Common planning time, professional development days, and instructional rounds have been significant factors in professional learning and improvement of student engagement, instruction, classroom environment, and student learning. The teacher evaluation process is a component of improving teaching and learning and formal and informal observations are tools to determine effectiveness. Many educators in the building have common planning time and this time is sometimes used for curriculum work. However, some teachers do not have common time with their counterparts. A professional development and evaluation committee (PDEC) plans professional development days, but there is a need for more clarity, concerning the professional learning goals for these days. Survey data shows that 61 percent of teachers believe there is not enough funding for professional development. Stakeholders expressed conflicting opinions about opportunities for professional learning experiences for the professional staff, given perceived budgetary constraints. Teachers and team leaders find instructional rounds to be very thought-provoking and reflective of practice, but there is not yet a formal plan in place to use instructional rounds data to formulate school and teacher goals around instructional practices. The school's team leaders recognize the need to implement more formal collaborative or PLC processes for educators during the school day so that teachers can focus on curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Educators examine evidence of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, and programs and services. The use of WEB as a tiered intervention helps student learning as it provides a time for personalized student support by classroom teachers, special education teachers, and other support staff. The student success team (SST) works closely with teachers to gather information about student achievement to better provide supports for students in need. While 100 percent of faculty stated through the NEASC survey that they use data to drive instruction, the collaborative time during the school day is not spent discussing student assessment data. One of the main strategic goals in the school improvement plan is to use this time to discuss student performance on assessments and determine next steps for growth. While teachers have common planning time to collaborate with colleagues on curriculum and instruction, there is little use of assessment data to make instructional decisions. Teachers use the Edmentum Accucess adaptive assessment, PSAT, and SAT to gather student assessment data, but still need to determine how best to use this evidence to make curricular, instructional, and assessment decisions for students. The professional staff identified that there is a need to examine ways to implement more formal collaborative processes to use evidence to drive decision-making in both the classroom and school.

Collaborative structures and processes support coordination and implementation of curriculum. Departments have common curriculum maps, templates for written curriculum on Google Docs, and specific standards by grade level and content area. For many teachers, common planning time is used to write curriculum. The science department is undertaking the creation and implementation of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), and the social studies and English departments have coordinated vertical teaming structures in an effort to articulate consistent curricula. The principal meets with departments monthly and meets with administrators from other schools to discuss student transition. While 98.4 percent of teachers report that curriculum is aligned, there is discrepancy between experiences in courses with multiple sections. Courses have a common curriculum, but implementation of that curriculum and specific lessons and assessments are neither consistent nor equitable.

School-wide organizational practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student. According to the NEASC survey, 72.6 percent of students find that adults take responsibility for students' academic achievement. There are opportunities for students to take both college prep courses and honors and AP/ECE level courses. 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. WEB is a block of time during which teachers and students can work together to make up assignments, learn in small groups, or resubmit assessments. Support staff use this time to work with students who have IEPs and 504 plans. There are co-taught classes with special education teachers and paraprofessionals for students who need such support. The SST plays a role in the support process and identifies students at-risk. There is a freshman connection program to help new students adjust to everyday life at GHS.

Educators develop productive student, family, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support learning. According to the NEASC survey, 91 percent of teachers and 87.6 percent of parents report that students have learning opportunities that involve community members and programs, and 82.5 percent of students agree. There is a display case outside of the main office that highlights many of the community services and opportunities for students in the area. Parents have opportunities to get involved at GHS, such as through PAC meetings and after school events. There are established relationships between GHS and local community colleges and universities at which students can enroll in courses free of charge to earn college credit. ECE courses allow students to earn UCONN credits, and AP courses on campus and on Virtual High School (VHS) require satisfactory scores on an assessment to earn credit at many universities. For instance, students enrolled in a partnership course are required to complete 40 hours of service learning in the community to receive credit. There is a certified nurse's aid program at GHS, which requires over 70 hours of clinical time in a local rehabilitation facility. There is a daycare facility within the building, and students can enroll in courses to work with children and plan lessons. The business department schedules mock interviews and other authentic opportunities for students to have real world experiences.

Sources of Evidence

- central office personnel
- department leaders
- NEASC survey
- parents
- school leadership
- school support staff
- self-reflection
- students
- teachers

Standard 4 - Learning Support

Narrative

The school has a wide range of appropriate intervention services to support the academic, social, and emotional success of all students. This includes counseling services, health services, library/information services, and other appropriate support services or strategies to support the school's mission statement. All students have access to appropriate intervention strategies that support academic, social, and emotional needs. The student success team (SST) is an integral part of early intervention through collaboration with teachers, related service staff, families, and students. Clear protocols and procedures exist for student referrals from concerned parents or staff. The school offers additional structures such as an academic academy, freshman connection, ELL services, an attendance team, and crisis team. GHS has a daily WEB period built into every student's schedule, providing 72 hours of intervention opportunity throughout the year. This period is conducted in a variety of ways, e.g., silent, independent work or free time sessions.

All students receive counseling services that meet their needs. The school provides three full-time school counselors, a full-time school social worker, and two full-time school psychologists - one assigned to Griswold High School and the other assigned to Griswold Alternative High School. The school psychologist and social worker provide liaison services with multiple community mental health and transition agencies, such as United Community and Family Services. Students' access to social-emotional service providers occurs on an as-needed basis initiated by the student and through staff or parent referrals. All students participate in an advisory program, which meets one time per week. Small groups have an assigned staff mentor, and students participate in presentations and discussions on various topics related to physical/mental health, social relations, current events, and academic planning. Through the student and safety wellness group, students have substantial input in the design of certain lessons for the advisory period through meeting and communicating regularly with administration about relevant concerns. Alumni are invited back yearly to share post high school experiences with current seniors.

All students receive health services that ensure their physical and emotional well-being. There is one full-time nurse and one full-time health aide at the school and one full-time health aide at Griswold Alternative School. The school nurses meet with counselors and support staff weekly to discuss individual or whole-student population concerns. Students are required to take a health course in which they are exposed to preventative health services and required topics such as drug abuse, domestic violence, sexual health education, nutrition, and physical fitness. The school nurses consult with the district athletic director to assure that eligibility requirements are met. Assessments provided by school health staff include scoliosis exams for grade nine males and follow-up for vision referrals. Nurses communicate daily with families of students in need, and provide referrals to outside practitioners. School health services maintain a relationship with the Lion's Club to provide vision screening assessments and support for corrective eyewear for students.

All students receive library/information services that support their learning. The library/media center is open from 6:45 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and provides access to technology such as desktops, laptops, and research materials for student use. According to the NEASC survey, 63.2 percent of students find that the library/media center is available during times when they need its resources, including before and after school. The library/media specialist actively works with students and staff in and out of the classroom, including serving as a liaison of the Virtual High School (VHS) classes, developing research skills with Early College Experience (ECE) classes, and supporting implementation of vertical alignment with the information literacy curriculum. According to the NEASC survey, 80.3 percent of students report using library/information services to support their learning. However, due to budgetary cuts affecting library/media center coverage by paraprofessional staff, the library/media specialist is curtailed from fully serving the staff and students, while classes are in the library/media center and when teachers would benefit from the library/media specialist's outreach to classrooms and school day teacher meetings.

Identified English language learners and students with special needs and 504 plans receive appropriate programs and services through a wide range of adequate/certified personnel. Six full-time special education

teachers, one English language learner interventionist, a board certified behavior analyst (BCBA), an occupational therapist (OT), and a physical therapist (PT) support student learning needs. There are also 17 instructional assistants. Students with 504 plans and IEPs receive services and supports within their regular classes or adaptive classes, based on student needs. A unified foods class will be offered to students next year. Additional offerings for specialized instruction include life skills and behavioral skills classes. Case managers, classroom teachers, administrators, parents, and students communicate formally and informally to ensure delivery of services for all students.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 5 - Learning Resources

Narrative

Griswold High School has adequate and appropriate time, funding, and facilities to support the realization of its core values, beliefs about learning, and developing 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.

The school provides all students with school buildings and facilities that support the delivery of curriculum, programs, and services. The site, plant, and equipment are clean, well-maintained, and support student learning and activities. The campus site provides necessary access for athletic fields or recreational opportunities, and improvement plans such as one for installing a new track are in place. Students and staff are proud of the beautiful campus setting. Classrooms are equipped with a variety of technology, including Chromebooks and SMART Boards. The library/media center and five computer labs provide additional access to technology and learning spaces. The physical plant and facilities are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety and support student learning.

Adequate time and financial resources are in place to support instruction, professional growth, and school programs and services. The schedule allows students a variety of core and elective offerings, including a WEB period at the end of each day. The WEB period was designed as an intervention system, but there are variety of ways the period is conducted, including silent, independent work sessions or free time. Most departments have a common prep within the two-day rotation, which is helpful for development of curriculum or common assessments. Adequate funds are available for professional development in school and out of district, but there is a conflicting perception among teachers that outside professional development, such as conference attendance, cannot be funded.

Despite significant state budget cuts, 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. According to the NEASC survey, 85.4 percent of staff believe the district does not provide adequate and dependable funding to support the implementation of curriculum and over 80 percent feel that there is not enough money for co-curricular learning programs. Nevertheless, the school offers a number of rigorous AP/ECE courses, either classroom based or via a virtual setting, through VHS. GHS also maintains strong partnerships with local community colleges, such as Three Rivers and Quinebaug Valley Community Colleges, through their College Career Pathway (CCP) programs. Students and staff proudly describe co-curricular offerings, such as athletic teams or substantial interdisciplinary involvement with the spring musical. There are myriad opportunities for all students to engage in transferable skills-based learning through internships with local businesses, the careers of our lives (COOL) directions program, or peer tutoring with younger grades.

The school has clear short-term and long-term plans to address the capital and maintenance needs within school buildings and facilities. Eighty-five percent of staff reports the school/district has short-term and long-term plans to address the capital and maintenance needs of the school. The school has an online maintenance/technology help desk request system on the school webpage for staff to report needs. There are nine custodial/maintenance workers, overseen by a head custodian, who engage in daily, weekly, and long-term projects. The school has clear safety protocols and has taken measures such as installing bullet-proof treatment on the outside of first-floor windows with plans to continue installation on the second floor windows. Guests must be admitted through a camera and intercom-enabled buzzer system; however, once incoming visitors are authorized to report to the main office by remote unlocking of the sally port, the distance to secure sign-in at the main office is significant and causes concern among the staff. School entrances are locked during regular school hours. The school has a three-year educational technology plan and a capital improvement plan to prioritize projects, including replacing the the aging boiler within two to three years.

The infrastructure and protocols in place allow GHS to respond very effectively in crisis situations. The school engages in strong communication with parents, students, staff, and a part-time school resource officer to ensure clear safety protocols for all stakeholders. There are clearly defined policies and regulations in place for safety exercises, such as lock downs, fire drills, and a crisis team. Clear information on appropriate procedures during crisis situations is accessible to staff and substitutes. The school resource officer divides his time between schools and is not in the building on Thursdays, and, while security cameras are in place on the first floor and external doors, they are not installed on the second floor. Nevertheless, according to the NEASC survey, 97 percent of teachers and 85 percent of students know what to do if there is a crisis.

Sources of Evidence

- central office personnel
- classroom observations
- department leaders
- facility tour
- NEASC survey
- school leadership
- self-reflection
- teacher interview
- teachers

Priority Areas

Priority Area

PRIORITY AREA FOR GROWTH #1, written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments across the school

Foundational Element: 2.2a: There is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments across the school.

SCHOOL'S REFLECTION

"Develop fluid curriculum for all courses offered at GHS."

VISITING TEAM RESPONSE

The team agrees with the school's finding that it needs a written curriculum in a consistent format. It is reassuring that a cycle for curriculum revision has been developed with the common template necessary for alignment. Since this is also Foundational Element 2.2a, the professional staff can include units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills; instructional strategies; and assessment practices to ensure that these documents integrate appropriately with the school's vision of the graduate and ensure that all students are consistently and frequently afforded opportunities to lead their own learning or participate in project-based learning activities in all courses.

Priority Area

PRIORITY AREA FOR GROWTH #2

Standard 3, Principle 3: Educators examine evidence of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, and programs and services.

SCHOOL'S REFLECTION

"Collect and utilize more meaningful data."

VISITING TEAM RESPONSE

The team agrees with the school's finding that it needs to collect and use more meaningful data, including data from a variety of formative and summative assessments, achievement data disaggregated by subgroups, individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's vision of the graduate, data from sending schools, and post-secondary data. Since this is also Standard 3, Principle 3, the the professional staff can more effectively examine evidence of student learning and well-being to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, and programs and services.

Priority Area

PRIORITY AREA FOR GROWTH #3, vision of the graduate

Principle 2.1: 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.

SCHOOL'S REFLECTION

"Continuously update the vision of the graduate with all stakeholders, and have it provide the main direction and focus for the school."

VISITING TEAM RESPONSE

The team agrees with the school's finding that it needs to continue its work on its vision of the graduate, so that the document explicitly 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. The school will also benefit from further coordinating its guiding documents, so that they have school-specific and measurable criteria to measure the expectations for learning and the transferable skills and dispositions and that all stakeholders understand the relationships between the mission statement, vision statement, statement of core values and beliefs, and vision of the graduate with its 21st century learning expectations and RISE expectations. Since this is also Principle 2.1, the school can ensure that there is no difficulty among teachers, department heads, students, parents, and other stakeholders in identifying which of the school's myriad tenets reside in which guiding document.

Commendations

Commendation

The variety of programs that promote a safe, positive, and inclusive culture

Commendation

The myriad opportunities for students to practice authentic skills in preparation for life after high school

Commendation

The student-to-student feedback opportunities that are part of the learning culture in some classes

Commendation

The implementation of instructional rounds into the culture of the school

Commendation

The incorporation of common departmental planning time into the daily schedule

Commendation

The opportunities available during the school day for all students to receive individual support with learning

Commendation

The comprehensive ownership of school safety protocols that include the involvement of students and parents

Commendation

The cleanliness of the building

Commendation

The pride in the school community that is apparent among staff, students, and parents

Commendation

The receptiveness of school leaders to feedback from faculty and staff members

Recommendations

Recommendation

Ensure that there is written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments across the school that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, and skills and integrates the school's vision of the graduate

Recommendation

Collect and use more meaningful data, including data from a variety of formative and summative assessments, achievement data disaggregated by subgroups, individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's vision of the graduate, data from sending schools, and post-secondary data

Recommendation

Continuously update the vision of the graduate with all stakeholders and ensure it provides the main direction and focus for the school and 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

Recommendation

Ensure that all students have access to challenging courses including AP, ECE, and world language offerings

Recommendation

Create school-specific and measurable criteria to measure the expectations for learning and the transferable skills and dispositions contained in, or linked to, the mission statement, vision, 21st century learning expectations, civic and social expectations, Griswold 2025 mission, Griswold 2025 student outcomes, statement of core values and beliefs about learning, vision of the graduate, RISE expectations, and habits of mind expectations, and explicitly coordinate all of the school's guiding documents, so that all stakeholders are familiar with, and understand the relationships between them

Recommendation

Ensure that all students are consistently and frequently afforded opportunities to lead their own learning or participate in project-based learning activities in all courses

Recommendation

Include all stakeholders in the development of the school improvement plan

Recommendation

Analyze the efficacy of the WEB intervention period to ensure that it equitably serves and engages all students

Recommendation

Ensure that the school library/media specialist can execute outreach services to classrooms and that the library/media center is accessible to students and staff on a regular basis before, during, and after school hours

Recommendation

Ensure that the school has the resources and infrastructure necessary to keep the school safe and secure, in light of the of the part time presence of the school resource officer, the modest number of security cameras building wide, and the significant distance from the visitors' entry point to the secure reception and sign in area

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

Mrs. Katie Blore - Lewis S. Mills High School

Ms. Lauren Moyer - Fairfield Warde High School