

**NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

**COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**



***REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE***

**Lyman Hall High School**

**Wallingford, CT**

November 16 - November 19, 2014

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# STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

The Committee on Public Secondary Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges considers this visiting committee report of Lyman Hall High School to be a privileged document submitted by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges to the principal of the school and by the principal to the state department of education. Distribution of the report within the school community is the responsibility of the school principal. The final visiting committee report must be released in its entirety within sixty days (60) of its completion to the superintendent, school board, public library or town office, and the appropriate news media.

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

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## INTRODUCTION

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

The governing body of the Association is its Board of Trustees which supervises the work of four Commissions: the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE), the Commission on Independent Schools (CIS), the Commission on Public Schools 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 American and International Schools Abroad (CAISA).

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

- Teaching and Learning Standards
  - Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations
  - Curriculum
  - Instruction
  - Assessment of and for Student Learning
  
- Support of Teaching and Learning Standards
  - School Culture and Leadership
  - School Resources for Learning
  - Community Resources for Learning.

The accreditation program for public schools involves a threefold process: the self-study conducted by the local professional staff, the on-site evaluation conducted by the Committee's visiting committee, and the follow-up program carried out by the school to implement the findings of its own self-study and the valid recommendations of the visiting committee and those identified by the Committee in the Follow-Up process. Continued accreditation requires that the school be reevaluated at least once every ten years and that it show continued progress addressing identified needs.

### **Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Study**

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Lyman Hall High School, a committee of nine members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people. In addition to faculty members, the self-study committees included parents, students, school board members, and central office professionals.

The self-study of Lyman Hall High School extended over a period of 24 months from October 2012 to October 2014. The visiting committee was pleased to note that students, citizens, parents, and school board members joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

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

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

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

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

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 22 hours shadowing 16 students for a half day
- a total of 20 hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)
- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facility
- individual meetings with 26 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers

- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

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

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

## SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY SUMMARY

Lyman Hall High School is located in Wallingford, Connecticut. This growing New England town in northern New Haven County is equidistant from New Haven and Hartford. Wallingford is home to a large variety of industries and corporations such as Bristol-Meyers Squibb, Cytec Industries, Gaylord Hospital, Quest Diagnostics, Masonicare, and Ulbrich Stainless Steel and Specialty Metals.

In 2011, the Wallingford's population was 45,509. The median household income in 2010 was \$72,782, which reflects an increase of 18.4% over the last 10 years. However, 6.8% of households in this district live below poverty level. According to the 2012 Connecticut Economic Resource Center Town Profile, the percentage of local resources spent on public education was 64%, and the percentage of local taxation spent on schools in the district was 88%. The average per pupil expenditure for 2012-2013 was \$13,929, which was slightly higher than the state average of \$13,780.

Wallingford Public Schools (WPS) is made up of two high schools, two middle schools, eight elementary schools, and two alternative schools. In addition, there are 11 independent schools within the town. According to the 2010-2011 Strategic School Profile, the racial/ethnic makeup of WPS is as follows: American Indian 0.1%; Asian American 4.6%; black 2.5%; Hispanic 13.0%; white 79.9%. In this district, 3.8% of the students reside in homes where English is not the primary language. WPS participates in the Open Choice Program, which allows 75 students from New Haven to attend WPS as part of a state initiative aimed at reducing racial, ethnic, and economic isolation.

Lyman Hall High School serves 1,135 students who are enrolled in grades 9-12. Enrollment includes students from other districts who are members of the Agriscience Education Program or in the Open Choice Program. The 2012 enrollment was 307 freshmen, 288 sophomores, 260 juniors, and 280 seniors. Projected enrollment for the 2013-2014 school year is 1,119.

As one of the graduation requirements, students at Lyman Hall High School must earn a minimum of 25 credits. In addition, students must complete a minimum of 30 hours of community service. The Class of 2013 far exceeded the minimum by logging a record total of 30,038 hours.

The graduation rate for the class of 2012 was 93.6%. The two-year dropout rate was 2%. Student attendance rate was 95.3%, and the average daily attendance rate of teachers (excluding professional days) was also 95.3%. Upon graduation in 2012, 48.0% of students enrolled in four-year colleges, 21.0% of students enrolled in two-year colleges, 12.8% entered directly into the workforce, 9.1% enlisted in the military, and 9.1% were undecided.

Students have opportunities to earn college credits from a variety of institutions outside of Lyman Hall. Along with the traditional academic coursework, students may choose to take classes in a variety of areas that offer Advanced Placement (AP), UCONN Early College Experience (ECE), or College and Career Pathway (CCP) credits. Students enrolled in Food Service Production can earn CCP credits from Gateway Community College. To create a more personalized environment, all students participate in a weekly 30-minute advisory period, which enables students to develop a meaningful relationship with a caring staff member. All of this result in a more personalized, student-centered academic experience.

Lyman Hall also offers a variety of extracurricular activities to provide students with opportunities to develop leadership skills and promote positive social experiences for all students, such as the Unified Sports and Unified Theater programs. Many clubs are involved in school-wide



projects, and have earned special recognition: Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) won an award from the Wallingford Chamber of Commerce for creating a public safety video to discourage texting while driving, Key Club received the Diamond Club of Distinction Award for providing leadership opportunities for its members and extensive community involvement, and our FFA Chapter received national recognition as a 3-Star Chapter.

Lyman Hall High School promotes and participates in a variety of community partnerships. These programs afford students with authentic learning experiences while creating relationships within the town. Students have the opportunity to participate in the Kohler Environmental Summer Institute at Choate Rosemary Hall where they develop a deeper understanding of environmental science. The Educational Center for the Arts, located in New Haven, offers talented students additional courses in creative writing, dance, theater, music, and visual arts. The career and technical education department provides students with internships at the Wallingford Day Care Center and surrounding elementary schools. These students also operate an annual in-house preschool program, which is open to members of the community. Automotive students perform preventative and restorative maintenance to both their own vehicles and the vehicles of Lyman Hall staff. The Cook's Table, a student managed restaurant, provides breakfast and lunch services throughout the year to school staff and community residents. The world languages and music departments, in collaboration with the Wallingford Senior Center, hold inter-generational activities in which students interact with senior citizens. One of the most anticipated community events is the annual student run Agriscience Fair. Hosting over 2,000 students from Wallingford and surrounding communities, Lyman Hall students conduct tours through the many student-created agricultural exhibits.

To support college and career readiness, Wallingford has established partnerships with numerous local businesses including Ulbrich Stainless Steel and Specialty Metals, Masonicare, Wallingford Chamber of Commerce, and Yale University. Students in the Certified Nursing Assistant's program work closely with Masonicare as part of the licensing procedure for the State of Connecticut. Highly qualified juniors may participate in the Discovery to Cure high school internship program at Yale University. This program exposes talented students to future career opportunities in biomedical sciences.

The community recognizes student achievement in academics, athletics, and citizenship in a variety of ways at Lyman Hall. Senior and underclassmen awards ceremonies take place each spring, at which a number of students are recognized with a variety of scholarships and awards. In addition, award ceremonies are held for the following: athletics, agriscience, music, Certified Nursing Program, National Honor Society, and Wallingford's Varsity Scholar Program. New to Lyman Hall is the Feathers Recognition Program. Through this program, the Lyman Hall community recognizes students and staff weekly for making positive contributions to the culture of the school.

Through its variety of programs, enrichment opportunities, and support from the Wallingford community, Lyman Hall lives its core values and beliefs.

**Note: The School and Community Summary was prepared by the staff of Lyman High School.**

**CORE VALUES, BELIEFS AND LEARNING EXPECTATION  
LYMAN HALL HIGH SCHOOL**

**Statement of Core Values, Beliefs and Expectations**

At Lyman Hall High School, students enter a diverse community that encourages academic growth and challenges them to develop the personal integrity and creative thinking skills necessary for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Expectations for Student Learning –

**KNOWLEDGE**

Performance Standard: The Lyman Hall High School student processes and applies information from a variety of areas to build a base of knowledge. The student uses this knowledge and strategies learned from multiple disciplines to solve problems and make sense of his/her world.

Attributes:

- Acquires, processes, and applies discipline-relevant knowledge within and across the disciplines.
- Applies fundamental, discipline-relevant knowledge to describe and analyze the world.

**COMMUNICATION**

Performance standard: The Lyman Hall High School student communicates effectively in a variety of ways. The student demonstrates skill in writing, speaking, and listening. The good communicator uses technology or artistic expression when appropriate to communicate his/her message.

Attributes:

- Communicates effectively in writing.
- Communicates effectively in speaking.
- Listens actively.
- Communicates effectively using various means of expression.

**INFORMATION ANALYSIS**

Performance Standard: The Lyman Hall High School student gathers information and analyzes concepts from a variety of content areas. The student interprets, synthesizes, and applies information to solve problems.

Attributes:

- Demonstrates skill in gathering information.
- Uses technology to access, process, and present information.
- Evaluates the quality of information as it relates to completing the task.
- Synthesizes information and applies it to solve problems.

**CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS**

Performance Standard: The Lyman Hall High School student uses critical thinking skills to solve problems and explore ideas. The student integrates information from multiple areas to shape his/her understanding and to make connections.

Attributes:

- Uses a variety of learning strategies to accomplish tasks.
- Integrates information from multiple areas.

- Makes meaningful connections to enhance understanding.

### **COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTOR**

Performance Standard: The Lyman Hall High School student makes a positive contribution to his/her community (classroom, school, town, nation, or world). He/She works well with students and staff from diverse backgrounds and shows respect for self and others.

Attributes:

- Exhibits behavior appropriate to social expectations.
- Recognizes needs within his/her community and takes positive action that is characteristic of good citizenship.
- Demonstrates respect for self and others.

### **SELF-DIRECTION**

Performance Standard: The Lyman Hall High School student accepts responsibility for him/herself and his/her own learning. The student acts ethically and with integrity as he/she demonstrates independence and self-regulation.

Attributes:

- Sets goals and works toward their successful completion.
- Works independently.
- Conducts self ethically while learning.

### **COLLABORATION**

Performance Standard: The Lyman Hall High School student works collaboratively with peers and with staff to accomplish tasks and achieve goals. The student contributes positively to the group dynamic while working toward project completion.

Attributes:

- Works cooperatively within a group self-assessing and monitoring own behavior.
- Demonstrates effective interpersonal skills while sharing ideas and accepting input from others
- Accepts and meets individual responsibilities thereby contributing to accomplishment of group goals.

# **COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS**

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**CORE VALUES, BELIEFS, AND LEARNING  
EXPECTATIONS**

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**CURRICULUM**

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**INSTRUCTION**

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**ASSESSMENT OF AND FOR STUDENT  
LEARNING**

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# 1

## Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

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

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

### Conclusions

The school community engages in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning. As part of their commitment to providing a quality education for students, the Lyman Hall High School (LHHS) community created its core values and beliefs in February 2008 with a mission team composed of a broad range of stakeholders from the school and community. The core values and beliefs were unanimously approved by the instructional committee of the board of education in May 2011. Development of learning expectations began in December 2009 with full participation of the faculty, and they established their learner expectations in November 2012. The mission team included academic and vocational teachers as well as educators in various career stages, a health/physical education teacher, a food service teacher, a math and an English teacher, two parent consultants, and a district school-to-career administrator. Discussions, revisions, and sharing in various stages of the process are documented in the core values and beliefs timeline. Evidence of some inquiry into current research-based best practices, primarily the Framework for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning and Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, was utilized. Both the core values and expectations are prominently displayed throughout the school. The statement is also included on the school stationery and regularly on the principal's monthly newsletter on the website. Eighty-one percent of students agree that they are familiar with their school's core values and beliefs about learning, as evidenced in the Endicott survey. Eighty-three percent of parents believe that the core values and beliefs outlined by the school represent shared values with the community at large. The latter is reinforced by conversations with students who highlighted their understanding of the school's values of diversity, academic growth, personal integrity, and creative thinking skills, which they related with pride. Students were able to articulate, in general terms, the core values. The development of the core values and beliefs into the daily life of

the school enhances unified identify, sense of purpose, and pride, which results in student achievement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (self-study, Endicott survey, classroom observations, students)

The school has challenging and measurable 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations for all students, which address academic, social, and civic competencies, and are generally defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted high levels of achievement. The school has a set of learning expectations that pairs “Critical Thinking Skills” and “Information Analysis” under academic competencies, “Collaboration”, “Communication” and “Self-Direction” under social competencies, and “Community Contribution” under civic responsibilities, underlined by a foundational “Knowledge Competency.” The rubric committee collaborated to design five rubrics for the academic and social competencies, with thirty hours of community service to measure the community contributor expectation. No school-wide rubric was created specifically for “Knowledge” as it is considered to be continuously assessed in each content-specific area. Expectation rubrics share common terminology and assign numeric values between one and four, with a “meets expectation” target of three, in each indicator per rubric that are reported twice yearly in PowerSchool. These ratings are not included in the students’ grade point averages and left to the discretion of individual teachers. Students who do not “meet expectations” are encouraged, but not required, to meet expectations. Results from the Endicott survey indicate that 79.2 percent of parents, 62.6 percent of students and 83.2 percent of staff feel that the school’s learning expectations are challenging. Results from the same study suggest the 92.6 percent of faculty agree that the rubrics pertaining to the school’s core values and beliefs statement are analytical and defined 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Students who shared their experiences during interviews and panel discussions supported this viewpoint with examples: critical thinking assignment in defense of a chosen point of view in a written argument for *The Scarlet Letter* in English; self-direction in every phase of independently caring for livestock; collaboration in ensemble performances; and a culture of acts of empathy and responsibility. LHHS has challenging, measurable 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations that adequately address academic, civic, and social competencies. Although these expectations are not embedded as a regular feature of all subject-area rubrics, they are intended to be used twice a year to measure student success. When school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted high levels of achievement are used consistently, all students will have the opportunity to demonstrate success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (teachers, Endicott survey, students, rubrics)

Lyman Hall’s Core Values, Beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school, and there is some evidence that these core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills are evidenced in instruction and assessment and guide the school’s policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocation. However, there is little evidence that Lyman Hall’s Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations drive curriculum development. Seventy-one percent of Lyman Hall’s staff reports in the Endicott survey that the school’s values and beliefs are actively reflected in the school’s culture. Posters identifying Lyman Hall’s Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations are found throughout the building. During interviews, both students and teachers spoke about the “PRIDE” feathers program and the “Live What You Believe” initiative. The PRIDE feathers program promotes core values and beliefs by recognizing students and staff with PRIDE feathers for demonstrating politeness, responsibility, independence, diligence, or empathy. For example, students have been presented with PRIDE feathers for offering support to students with special needs; opening doors for teachers, students, and guests; and helping classmates locate lost items. The “Live What You Believe” initiative was created for teachers to share activities and reflect on the core values and beliefs statement. These activities were reported to the assistant principal via email in 2013. Eighty-six percent of students report in the Endicott survey that they are familiar with their schools’ learning expectations (academic, social, and civics) while 88.4 percent of the staff report that the school’s core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations are clear to them. Each department takes a lead role in

addressing two learning expectations using the school-wide rubrics twice a year as evidenced by the assessment spreadsheet. An example of the incorporation of the learning expectations was observed in an English class during which students utilize both critical thinking and communication skills when creating a Holocaust-researched bulletin board. A newly implemented Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) Team was created and reflects how the core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills drive policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocation. One responsibility of the PBIS Team is to create advisory lessons, such as writing thank you notes; demonstrating empathy; discussing ethical dilemmas; and organizing team-building activities. Also, during student interviews, students reported that they have at least one adult in the school with whom they have a positive relationship. Finances are allocated to support the implementation of programs that represent the core values and beliefs. As indicated in the self-study "administration allowed for training opportunities to promote personal integrity, such as the Anti-Defamation League's Anti-Bullying Program...and travel expenses for Unified Sports and Dream Team." Since the report was published, Lyman Hall High School has implemented Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) through the Polite Responsible Independent Diligent Empathetic (PRIDE) program. Additionally, in the years from 2011-2013, according to the business manager at that time, professional development funds were provided to attain substitutes while teachers and administrators were engaged in data team collaboration and NEASC workshops. However, 65.3 percent of staff believes that the school's core values and beliefs about learning guide decisions related to policies, procedures, and the allocation of resources. Through conversations with the district-wide curriculum directors, proposals to collapse the five academic levels have not been successful and as a result, it is unclear if all students are being exposed to challenging curriculum. In addition, curriculum directors indicated that while some common summative assessments are issued for like-courses, Lyman Hall's Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations are not driving curriculum from the district level and district coordinators are unfamiliar with the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Lyman Hall's Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations are part of the fabric of the school, and continued application of these learning expectations using school-wide rubrics on a more consistent basis across disciplines and with the support from the district curriculum directors will provide students additional opportunities to demonstrate a more conscious awareness of their 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. (teachers, Endicott survey, students, rubrics)

Lyman Hall's administration, faculty, and students continuously reviewed and revised their core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations from 2008-2011; however, there is no evidence to indicate that these reviews and revisions are a current, ongoing, part of the district and community's priorities, and are based on research and multiple data sources. The initial contributors of the core values and beliefs development team consisted of administrators, teachers, and parents. A clear timeline of the reviews and revisions from February 2008 to May 2011 indicates student input through the advisory program and student council. In addition, the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations were presented to and approved by the entire faculty, the parent-teacher advisory committee, and the board of education during that same period of time from 2008-2011. In November 2012, school-wide rubric writing began, and as recently as February, 2013, during advisory, students reflected on core values, beliefs, and learning expectations by analyzing and applying their understanding to a YouTube speech by motivational speaker, Eric Thomas. Data team meetings, by department, occur on a monthly basis after school as indicated on Lyman Hall's meeting schedule calendar. Currently, there is not a committee in place that consistently reviews and revises the core values and beliefs statement and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The creation of and involvement by stakeholders in establishing Lyman Hall's Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations were clearly evidenced. Using research and multiple data sources to influence revisions with regularly scheduled reviews will help target opportunities for growth and will ensure that all students are equipped with 21<sup>st</sup> century expectations upon graduation from Lyman Hall High School. (teachers,

students, core values and beliefs timeline, business manager email, Endicott survey, classroom observations)

### **Commendations**

1. The culture of the school that is driven by the core values and beliefs
2. The adequate research and collaboration to develop core values, beliefs, and learning expectations
3. The development of analytic rubrics that address defined learning expectations using clear terminology
4. The variety of course offerings and organizations that reflect Lyman Hall's Core Values and Beliefs
5. The challenging, measurable 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations that address academic, civic, and social competencies
6. The prominent printed display of Lyman Hall's Core Values, Beliefs, Learning Expectations and PRIDE that is visible throughout the building

### **Recommendations**

1. Develop and consistently employ methods to clarify and reinforce student, parent, and community awareness of the core values and beliefs
2. Implement a process to regularly review the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that includes students, teachers, parents, and district curriculum directors



**2****Curriculum**

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

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

## Conclusions

At Lyman Hall High School (LHHS), most of the current curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Each department had input in selecting two 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, which are embedded in their curriculum. Based on the Endicott survey, 63.2 percent of the teachers agree that the curriculum guides are designed to provide a continuum of both curriculum and learning expectations. Within the past two years, teacher input has been solicited to rewrite curricular documents. Curriculum has been rewritten in English, mathematics, and social studies to be aligned with Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills. The curriculum writing process includes members of both high schools in the district. However, the district-based template for curriculum development does not provide for each school to tailor curriculum to meet the unique needs of its student population. Additionally, many teachers report that their input was edited out of the final documents. Continued development and implementation of a curriculum that is aligned to standards, Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and other, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations will help to ensure all students have greater opportunities to practice and achieve the expectations. (teacher interviews, Endicott survey, central office personnel, curriculum coordinators)

Most of the curriculum is written in a common format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills. Staff reports 55.8 percent agreement with the statement, "There is a common, formal, curriculum template that is used in all subject areas." Although written curriculum does not contain explicit reference to the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, the documents do include specific references to instructional strategies for delivery of the content and student learning. Assessment strategies are also referenced in the curriculum documents. District-wide and school-wide rubrics were reported as being used by teachers and curriculum coordinators and new curriculum templates reflect explicit assessments. A continued, systemic revision of curriculum that includes teacher collaboration from both schools and alignment of standards and expectations to 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills will assist the school with a clear, comprehensive, and coherent curriculum. (self-study, Endicott survey, student work)

The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem solving. Some students report that the curriculum being taught allows them to explore other interests through authentic tasks in areas such as automotive, agriscience, food services, nursing, and child care. Lessons integrate independent research and challenge students to engage in higher order thinking and, in some areas, cross-disciplinary learning. Students and teachers report that students are engaged in activities that are relevant to students' lives and interests. The Endicott survey reports that 50.2 percent of students believe their school provides opportunities for learning off-campus. For example, the student-run Food Truck is now operational and making appearances at various events throughout the town. Additionally, The Cook's Table, a student-run restaurant, extends students' experience beyond the classroom servicing the entire school community. The Independent Community and Employment Training (ICE-T) program offers special needs students cooperative work experiences at local businesses along with a life skills-based curriculum. Eighty-three percent of the staff reports that the curriculum emphasizes authentic application of knowledge and skills. The reading interventionist reports some of the low-level reading students have expressed a desire to read aloud to young children. Internships are available in preschools, licensed childcare centers, YMCA programs, and hospitals. The majority of students report they are knowledgeable about the ethical use of technology. Each year students and parents are required to sign and return a form stating their compliance with the responsible use policy for technology which is based on the Wallingford Public Schools' Board of Education policy. When all teachers collaboratively and independently offer increased opportunities for students to engage in higher order thinking emphasizing depth of

understanding and application of knowledge that is driven by student interests, students will increase their depth of understanding. (students, teacher interviews, Endicott survey)

There is alignment between most of the written and taught curriculum. According to the Endicott survey, 68.4 percent of teachers agree that the written and taught curriculum is aligned. Teachers report that one curriculum document spans a possible five academic levels. Teachers indicate that they teach the curriculum with a variety of depth, depending on the level of the student. Central office personnel state that the administrative and teacher leadership structures support the curriculum writing and implementation of the written curriculum. Curriculum coordinators serve as an additional layer to monitor the implementation of the curriculum. The school self-study cites the curriculum coordinators, department chairpersons, and subject area teachers as monitors of curriculum writing and revision. Central office personnel and curriculum coordinators indicate that the five academic levels present a challenge to the fidelity of the implementation of the written curriculum. Teachers report that the five academic levels increase the complexity of teacher preparation. Once a thorough review of the number of academic levels is completed, students will be able to fully benefit from the alignment between written and taught curriculum. (Endicott survey, teacher interviews, self-study, central office personnel, curriculum coordinators)

There is limited effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation between and among all academic areas within the school, as well as with sending schools both inside and outside of the district. Teachers indicate a curriculum review cycle that is approximately five years in length. Central office personnel state that the cycle has moved away from a static five-year process, but has moved to using Google Docs as a method to recognize and encourage the idea of a “living” curriculum that is always changing. Some subject area teachers indicate that their curriculum has not been revised in more than ten years, with many areas indicating that revisions occurred approximately eight years ago. Curriculum coordinators and teachers both state that district curriculum is written through consultation and the inclusion of teachers from both high schools within the district. Although time is scheduled for common planning within departments, teachers indicate the time is not regularly used for this purpose. Central office personnel and curriculum coordinators both share the belief in the importance of the relatively new K-12 supervisory structure for the vertical articulation of curriculum. The self-study, students, and teachers all report the lack of vertical articulation between sending schools and the high school. The students express difficulty with the transition into high school due to the demands of the high school program. Another challenge to vertical articulation for Lyman Hall exists due to the number of sending schools from many surrounding districts, especially in the regional agriscience program. The curriculum coordinators mention the importance of data teams, department chairs, and management teams to ensure vertical articulation. The middle school principal and assistant superintendent cite recent initiatives that are improving the articulation including changes in the world languages curriculum and programming, math curriculum, and targeted student summer support. When all teachers in the school and across the district share common understanding about student learning and student ability, a more effective curricular progression will ensure that all students will be prepared to achieve the learning expectations. (teachers, students, central office personnel, curriculum coordinators)

Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/ media center are generally sufficient to implement the changing curriculum in core academic areas, but not in some electives. The staffing levels at Lyman Hall are generally adequate to implement the changing curriculum in core academic areas. The LHHS teacher survey reports 75 percent of the core area teachers believe staffing levels are sufficient to deliver their current curriculum. However, many teachers expressed concerns that should the current five academic levels be collapsed into fewer levels, their class sizes would increase making it more difficult to provide personalized instruction to basic and general level students. The LHHS teacher survey also states that

60 percent of the elective area teachers feel current staffing is sufficient to deliver their curriculum. Class sizes can range from as few as six students to as many as 32 students. The Endicott survey shows that 49 percent of respondents perceive class sizes as reasonable, while 40 percent feel class sizes are unreasonable. The extent to which the current instructional materials enable the school to implement all parts of the curriculum is inconsistent. For example, some teachers report that new texts purchased at the end of last year for some basic and general level English courses are proving inappropriate for students enrolled in those courses. The results of the Independent Reading Level Assessment screening indicate students in these classes currently read at a third- and fourth-grade reading level, while the newly acquired texts have a much higher Lexile level. Special education teachers indicate there is no defined reading program listed or used in the curriculum. English and social studies teachers report a need for technology to better meet the diverse student literacy needs and to make a successful transition to the CCSS and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) test. Some teachers in elective courses, such as those offered in career and technical education, also express a need for added technology to increase the opportunities for students to experience real-life application of their 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Many other teachers and central office personnel readily admit that the technology support department is understaffed. Some departments report there are logistical issues with the current technology equipment that have yet to be resolved. This limits teachers' access to the technology to deliver the curriculum. According to the LHHS teacher survey, 72 percent of teachers state they do not know if the library/media center resources are adequate to meet the needs of the current curriculum. Similarly, when asked if the library/media center resources are meeting their educational needs, students were not sure. Also, instructional aides report they do not have access to computers, inhibiting their ability to readily communicate with case managers and teachers via e-mail, which is the primary means of communication in the school. Some students stated their science classes do not have adequate lab equipment for every student, and some textbooks are not distributed equitably; some students are issued paper workbooks and must access the textbook online while others receive only the paper text. The website offering the online text is often inaccessible. The school's facilities are adequate to deliver the current curriculum, with the exception of the physical education department. The current space allocated for physical education classes inhibits teachers from fully implementing the curriculum. When a common vision is shared between teachers and administrators, educators will be able to identify and support appropriate staffing needs and will be able to select and utilize engaging instructional materials and technology, all of which are needed to engage every student in tasks within the written curriculum reflective of the high demands of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. (LHHS teacher survey, Endicott survey, teachers, students, instructional aides, central office personnel)

The district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research. Central office personnel cite multiple levels of support for collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum. They state that the current structures of school-based data teams, management teams, curriculum coordinators, and department heads offer flexible opportunities and encourage teacher involvement in the process of curriculum writing and revision. Pull-out and stipend opportunities are both in place. Additionally, the school has implemented common department planning time this school year. However, the teachers state that this model limits their professional learning and collaborative development. The remaining planning time currently available is one, half-period during the school day. Teachers report that they tend to use the common department planning time for their own personal planning and correcting. They believe this structure would offer the opportunity to create and implement innovative ideas that may assist in the revision of the curriculum. Curriculum coordinators and central office personnel describe some common assessments and their use to measure the implementation of the curriculum. Teachers, however, mention the disconnection between the central-office designed assessments and the curriculum that is taught in the classroom. They are concerned about too few opportunities for them to integrate assessment results into the curriculum revision process. The

Endicott survey reports that 20 percent of the teaching staff has sufficient time to be engaged in the formal curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work. Sixty-three percent of teachers report that they are directly involved in curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work. When a shared vision exists among all stakeholders and implemented through a coherent and collaborative model within the school, all will be engaged in a process of researching and incorporating best instructional practice into the writing and revision of the curriculum. (Endicott survey, teacher interviews, central office personnel)

### **Commendations**

1. The dedication and pride of the teachers in their delivery of the curriculum
2. The format of the curriculum template that has recently been modified to include specific reference to standards, authentic learning opportunities, and a variety of assessments including performance-based assessments
3. The teachers who are reflective in their practice and welcome opportunities to collaborate on curriculum revision and are willing to offer more opportunities for students to demonstrate their skills

### **Recommendations**

1. Review and revise the leveling structure of courses as a means to ensure that the written curriculum is implemented for all students
2. Develop and initiate a plan to increase collaborative planning time
3. Create a shared vision and plan for the district-wide continued writing and revision of curriculum for all content areas
4. Design and implement curriculum that includes instructional practices that utilize technology to engage students in the higher order, student-centered activities required for achieving 21<sup>st</sup> century skills
5. Conduct a review of current library/media resources to ensure that curriculum needs are supported

## **3** Instruction

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

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

## Conclusions

Most teachers incorporate instructional practices which are consistent with the core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Each department is responsible for assessing and preparing students to meet two learning expectations. Teachers use PowerSchool to report students' progress toward meeting each of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations as measured by the school-wide rubrics. Teachers report that they consistently use the verbiage of the learning expectations in their classes so students become more comfortable with the values and recognize their relation to everyday activities in the real world. Some parents indicate that even though they are unfamiliar with the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectation rubrics tied to the core values, they feel that students have learned collaboration, self-respect, and time management skills through the implementation of the core values. Although students are able to share their experiences about community service, collaboration, and self-direction opportunities in and out of school, they were not able to provide specific examples of critical thinking and information analysis. Classroom lessons are aligned to the core values in preparation for assessments as outlined in the committee-created spreadsheet that provides specific examples of how each core value is applied to instruction in all content areas. Core values are also incorporated into advisory through specific lessons. The level to which the core values are referenced and explicitly taught in each class varies among teachers as evidenced by the Endicott survey in which 63 percent of teachers respond that they continuously examine their instructional practices to ensure consistency with the school's core values and beliefs about learning, 11.6 percent are in disagreement and 25.3 percent are undecided. Developing a consistent process for examining instructional practices and aligning them with the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations will increase students' opportunities to achieve. (Endicott survey, teacher interviews, students, parents, student work)

Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations by emphasizing inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking skills; however, there is an inconsistent understanding among the teachers of personalizing instruction. Some teachers provide opportunities that personalize instruction to match students' interests, as evidenced by project and/or activity choices in science, AP Statistics, and world languages, and to a limited extent in social studies/history, and English as students are able to choose from a pre-determined list of topics in these areas. This is further supported by the Endicott survey in which 53.2 percent of students are in agreement that their teachers give them opportunities to choose topics for some assignments. Students report that they are often able to choose the manner in which they support their oral presentations with visuals, but do not have the opportunity to select a different manner of completing assignments if their strength is not oral presentations. According to the Endicott survey, 36.5 percent of students agree that their teachers personalize their instruction. While students report that they are often engaged in cross-disciplinary learning, teachers report that they would like to have more time to develop lessons with teachers from other subject areas to include planned cross-disciplinary units. Teachers indicate that the new curricula drive their pacing in a way that purposeful creation of cross-disciplinary units with colleagues from other departments is not possible; despite this limitation, numerous examples exist of cross-disciplinary teaching and learning: teachers outside of English language arts (ELA) and math incorporate the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) into their lessons; social studies teachers utilizes a district-wide writing rubric; math intervention classes have reinforced graphing to increase student success in biology; and food service teachers instruct students on basic math problems for recipe conversions. Students are often engaged in their classes as active and self-directed learners through hands-on activities, collaborative learning, discussions and debates, the use of interactive technology, and dialogue with teachers, although some students report that they can be passive in class and still experience success. Students apply their learning to authentic tasks in various areas of study: creating a literary magazine in English classes, creating a public service announcement about

the environment in social studies, working with plants and animals in agriscience classes, and playing games in physical education class where they exhibit sportsmanship and develop strategies for winning. Teachers confirmed that students are often engaged in self-assessment, which was further substantiated by the Endicott survey in which 70.7 percent of students agree that teachers provide them opportunities to assess their own work and in the student work samples shown during teacher interviews. Teachers have begun to incorporate technology into their classes more frequently since more Google Chromebooks have been purchased and LCD projectors have been installed in most classrooms. Technology used for instructional purposes includes, among others, Google Docs that facilitate the editing of documents and immediate feedback between teachers and students, the creation of online games that students respond to with their smart phones to provide real-time formative assessment data, and Google Classroom which enables teachers to provide lessons and assignments via the web even when their class has not met. Overall, teachers' instructional practices throughout the school engage students as active learners, require that they apply knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, and encourage students to engage in self-reflection. When teachers have the opportunity to meet between departments in a consistent manner, additional cross-disciplinary connections for students will be enhanced. (students, standard subcommittee, teacher interviews, Endicott survey, student work, student shadowing, self-study)

Many teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student during instructional time through the use of formative assessments and purposeful grouping during learning activities; however, other than the results from the Endicott survey, there is limited evidence of differentiated instruction in many classes. A variety of formative assessments are used in most classes to inform and adjust instruction such as Document-Based Questions (DBQs), exit slips, mini-white board responses, regular checks for understanding through quizzes, and peer evaluation. Additionally, teachers who are involved in researching competency-based grading provide unlimited opportunities for students to revise work and retake assessments until they exhibit mastery. Many teachers strategically place students in mixed ability groups to encourage peer tutoring or homogeneous ability groups in order to specifically address the needs of that group. Students are often assigned roles in their groups to maintain engagement in the activities. According to the Endicott survey, 83 percent of students agree that teachers use group activities in their classes, and 76.8 percent of staff adjust their instructional practices by using group activities. Group activities were also observed during student shadowing. Teachers provide additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom during individual work time as evidenced by classroom visits, teacher interviews, and parent responses in the Endicott survey. In co-teaching classes students were provided individual scaffolding for writing and instruction on how to use the rubrics. In math classes, as students work individually, teachers assist students who are having difficulty with the current concept. Teachers are readily available to further assist students after and before school as evidenced in observed classes, student and parent comments, meetings with instructional aides, and teacher interviews. According to the Endicott survey 78.4 percent of parents agree that teachers provide support to their son/daughter when needed. Faculty members at Lyman Hall have made great efforts to adjust their instructional practices so they are meaningful and purposeful to the students. However, when differentiation strategies are used more frequently school-wide, instructional quality will improve. (student work, teachers, parents, classroom observations, students, Endicott survey)

All teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments and by examining student work. Through regular data team meetings, teachers collaboratively examine student work and share best practices. Many teachers also engage in professional discourse focused on instructional practice. Some teachers informally use feedback from students and other teachers to improve instructional practices. Few teachers use feedback from parents and some teachers report using feedback from their department chairs through observations and department meetings to improve



instructional practices. Additionally, few teachers articulated how examining current research improved their professional practices. Teachers state that they have a strong data team process which has enabled them to move from a content-focus to a skill-based focus allowing them to address specific practices and adjust instruction accordingly. Through the Connecticut System for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED), all teachers are required to individually use student achievement data to guide and improve instruction. In data team meetings which occur once per month and in the newly implemented common planning time, teachers have regular opportunities to discuss student performance and teaching strategies as well as to develop common formative assessments and subsequently to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the varying instructional strategies implemented by the teachers in the department; however, the common planning time occurs every other day during a common preparation period among teachers in the department. Teachers may choose whether to use the preparation period to commonly plan or to work individually. Students report that many teachers ask for their feedback about both their level of learning and their learning styles, and sometimes ask for feedback about their teaching strategies and how effective they are for the students. To improve their instructional practices, teachers report having informal discussions with colleagues and formal discussions in data teams and common planning time. According to the Endicott survey, 23.8 percent of parents say that their sons' / daughters' teachers have asked them for feedback about their instructional practices. This was further confirmed in teacher meetings in which one example was provided of the incorporation of parent feedback to better communicate students' strengths and weaknesses in a subject area. While parent feedback is sought bi-annually through a school-wide survey, the information on the parent survey is too general to inform individual teachers' instruction. Teachers report in their self-study that some department chair positions were eliminated four years ago thereby reducing the opportunity for regular feedback by a supervisor in their subject area. While the core areas continue to have department chairs, they do not observe for evaluative purposes. Some department chairs continue to observe their teachers informally and provide valuable feedback that the teachers use to improve their instructional practices. Teachers, however, indicate that classroom observations occur less frequently due to the shifts in the evaluation system. The self-study indicates that teachers, individually and collaboratively, use current research to improve their instructional practice; however, in teacher meetings, teachers stated that professional development based on current research is assigned to them by central office and is not helpful in acquiring new knowledge to improve their practices. For example, teachers were required to read the book *Mindset* which some stated had a minimal impact on instruction. Additionally, teachers read Marzano's *Effective Teaching Strategies* and stated that they were already using Marzano's strategies in their classes before reading the book; however, many have incorporated more graphic organizers into their teaching since reading the book. The use of achievement data from a variety of assessments and the inclusion of feedback from students and other teachers has a positive impact on improving instructional practices. When teachers receive differentiated and meaningful research-based professional development that specifically meets the needs of individual departments, their instructional practices will improve. (teachers, standard subcommittee, Endicott survey, self-study)

As adult learners and reflective practitioners, almost all Lyman Hall teachers maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices. Teachers participate in varied professional development opportunities on a continuing basis. Additionally, according to their self-study, six teachers served on New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) visiting committees. Teachers stated that they read content-specific literature and journals, and department chairs share pertinent literature about current research and developments in their content areas with their department members once per month. According to the Endicott survey, 88.4 percent of teachers agree that they maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices. As teachers continue to develop their instructional practices by maintaining their expertise in their content area and research-based best practices, the level of instruction at Lyman Hall will continue to

align with new developments in 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning. (self-study, teachers, student work Endicott survey)

### **Commendations**

1. The teachers' instructional practices that support the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
2. The students' familiarity with and understanding of the community contributor, collaboration, and self-direction learning expectations
3. The students' application of their learning to authentic tasks
4. The increased use of technology as an effective instructional tool in all curricular areas
5. The availability of extra help for students before, during, and after school
6. The use of student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments by most teachers
7. The use of feedback from students and teachers to improve instructional practices
8. The dedicated faculty pursuit of knowledge in their content-area through reading journals, attending conferences, and reflecting upon their practices

### **Recommendations**

1. Develop a shared understanding of personalized instruction
2. Provide opportunity for an emphasis on the creation and implementation of cross-disciplinary connections
3. Develop a procedure to determine specific faculty professional learning needs and provide meaningful professional development based on current research to improve instructional practices in all areas, including support services



## Assessment of and for Student Learning

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

1. The professional staff continuously employs a formal process, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
2. The school's professional staff communicates:
  - individual student progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to students and their families
  - the school's progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to the school community.
3. Professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.
4. Prior to each unit of study, teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed.
5. Prior to summative assessments, teachers provide students with the corresponding rubrics.
6. In each unit of study, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.
7. Teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments.
8. Teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.
9. Teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.
10. Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, including all of the following:
  - student work
  - common course and common grade-level assessments
  - individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
  - standardized assessments
  - data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions
  - survey data from current students and alumni.
11. Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning.

## Conclusions

Lyman Hall High School (LHHS) is in the early stages of implementing a formal plan to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Administration and teachers have developed rubrics for five of the seven 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations that are used at minimum, twice per academic year in content area courses. School-wide rubrics assess students' progress on information analysis, collaboration, critical thinking, communication, and self-direction. Community contributor hours are tracked and reported to the school counseling office, as this is a graduation requirement. At the time of the Endicott survey, 75.8 percent of teachers understood the process for using the school-wide rubrics. During interviews teachers have noted that professional development opportunities have aided their understanding of the implementation process. Students state that most teachers use teacher/department rubrics in their classes, but most have not used the school-wide rubrics. Further, teachers describe how they regularly and informally measure student progress toward achieving the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, but that the use of the rubrics is limited. Teachers state that this is the first year that student progress toward achieving the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations is required to be entered into PowerSchool by the end of the second and fourth marking periods. The board of education noted that the principal will report on current progress toward achieving 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations at a December board meeting. A more consistent process of assessing whole-school and individual progress will result in a complete and accurate assessment of the degree to which students are achieving the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (teacher interviews, panel presentation, Endicott survey, students)

The school's professional staff communicates individual student progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to students and their families and the school's progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to the school community. The professional staff uses PowerSchool, as their online gradebook, to report individual student progress in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to students and their families. Teachers report student progress to students in class. Parent and students can also view information posted in PowerSchool. School administration mailed home monthly newsletters describing the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. These newsletters are also posted on the school's website. However, interviews with parents and families indicate that they are not familiar with how to access information about their student's progress in achieving the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The strategic school plan will address student progress in achieving 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The board of education will then post the strategic plan on the town's website, which will be available to the public. When a consistent, articulated plan for formal communication for both individual student and whole-school progress toward achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations is available, effective information exchange within the school community will be ensured. (teacher interviews, board of education, student work)

The professional staff at LHHS collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to respond to inequities in student achievement. Beginning this year, teachers are afforded common planning time during the school day and data team meeting time to review common performance tasks, district assessments, and common summative assessments. Common planning time provides teachers of each subject area the same planning period. However, inconsistent use of common planning time has been reported. Data teams are also organized by specific courses and/or departments to provide teachers an opportunity to meet after school once a month to analyze data. To address inequities in course placement, students entering ninth grade have screenings for both English and mathematics to determine the need for additional support beyond the standard classroom setting. Some students receive Tier II Scientific Research Based Interventions, while others who are identified require Algebra in ninth grade every day, as opposed to every other day. The science department analyzes Connecticut

Academic Performance Test (CAPT) data for each student to determine their needs and what interventions are necessary. Although there is currently no Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) data available, math and English departments analyze data from individual and common assessments. When common planning and data team structures focus on data analysis, teachers will be able to provide students with additional supports to address inequities in achievement. (self-study, teacher interviews, board of education)

Prior to each unit of study, some teachers communicate the school's applicable 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to students. Some teachers, however, only convey daily objectives to students. While the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations are posted in all classrooms and communal areas of the school, many times there is no direct communication from teachers to students about which skills are to be learned and assessed. In the Endicott survey, 69 percent of students report, as confirmed by student comments, that they believe teachers communicate content-specific learning goals before instruction and assessment. Students do note that some teachers inconsistently describe unit-specific learning goals at the beginning of each unit. When communication about the learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals from teachers is consistent, students will understand what will be assessed. (students, Endicott survey, student work)

Most teachers provide students with corresponding rubrics prior to summative assessments. Many teachers assign a task and provide students with the corresponding department or teacher rubric. According to student interviews, graphic organizers are also used to aid students in understanding and completing tasks. Each department has created rubrics for specific tasks and assessments. At the time of the Endicott survey, 57.9 percent of teachers agree that they use the school-wide analytic rubrics when assessing student work. According to the board of education and teacher panel, however, all teachers currently should be using the 21<sup>st</sup> century rubrics to assess the students at least twice per academic year on two of the expectations for student learning. The consistent provision of department/teacher rubrics to students prior to summative assessments will provide students with a clear understanding of the performance expectations which will result in greater achievement of the skills being assessed. (Endicott survey, students, teacher interviews, student work)

Teachers at LHHS employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments. As evidenced in teacher observations, most teachers use warm-up materials, exit slips, and other types of formative assessment to determine that the learning objectives have been met. Some world languages teachers require students to present topics specific to their lives, while other students are assessed through their follow-up questions. Math teachers provided examples of how they assess students with exit slips as a check for understanding. English teachers ask students to submit questions about the current material that remain unanswered by the end of the lesson. Students report that the various types of assessments the teachers are providing are both frequently occurring and are valid indicators of their performance. English and math departments utilize performance tasks for each unit. Because of the new standardized testing, the curriculum coordinators provide some of the performance tasks. However, teachers expressed concern that some assessments provided by the curriculum coordinators are not directly aligned to the curriculum, and these assessments are independent and inappropriately scaffolded tasks. The varying forms of both formative and summative assessments provide students with ample opportunities to demonstrate mastery of skills in the classroom. (teacher interviews, student work, students)

Teachers collaborate regularly in both formal and informal ways as it pertains to the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments. Although the Endicott survey shows that 54 percent of teachers report there is enough time to meet in data teams, teachers now agree that data teams meet at least once a month to create and analyze assessments and assessment data. In addition to time for data team meetings, administration has provided all teachers with department-

wide common planning and early release time to collaborate on the creation and analysis of formative and summative assessments. Several departments, including but not limited to technology, science, and world languages, discussed instances of effective use of this common planning time to create appropriate lessons, tasks, and assessments. In some content areas, common planning time is also used to analyze assessment data, which limits teachers from using this time to collaborate and create lessons, tasks, and assessments. As a result of formal common planning time and data team meetings, teachers have opportunities to regularly collaborate to create and analyze assessments. (teacher interviews, board of education, self-study, Endicott survey)

The majority of teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work. The board of education noted that teachers are required to update PowerSchool weekly. Teacher interviews and classroom observations revealed that teachers continuously provide students with specific feedback to improve their work. Although the Endicott survey shows that 60 percent of students report that teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback, evidence collected from student conversations and classroom observations indicate that that most teachers are doing so. Students indicate that corresponding rubrics have been helpful to provide specific and useful feedback, while some students indicate that there is an inconsistency among teachers as to the depth of the feedback. Some students receive feedback about areas of strengths and weaknesses, while other students receive a grade, without specific feedback. In addition, students state that some teachers allow for assignment and assessment revision, while others do not. When feedback from teachers is consistently specific, timely, and corrective, all students will be afforded the opportunity to develop an understanding of mastery. (board of education, student work, students)

Teachers at Lyman Hall High School regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning. The Endicott survey shows that 83 percent of teachers improve their instructional practices by using student data from formative assessments. During classroom observations and student shadowing, it was observed that teachers continually monitor understanding and adapt lessons when needed. In an observation of an English class, when the teacher reviewed entrance tickets and realized students were struggling with symbolism, tragic hero, and irony, she had students turn and talk to two peers to seek clarification for these topics. Some adaptations include exit slips, warm ups, daily homework, and the use of various grouping strategies. In addition, the English department provides opportunities for self-assessment and peer assessment. Students indicate the usefulness of self-assessments in history and science. By consistently using formative assessments, teachers at Lyman Hall High School are able to adapt instruction to fit the needs of their students and improve student learning. (classroom observations, student shadowing, Endicott survey, student work)

Both teachers and administrators examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of improving instructional practices; however, this evidence is not formally used to refine or adjust curriculum. Through the use of data teams and common planning time, the departments are able to analyze student work, grade-level assessments, and data from sending schools to adjust and improve instruction; however, according to the self-study, survey data from current students and alumni is not analyzed. Specifically, the reading specialist indicated the use of Independent Reading Level Assessment (IRLA) to ensure that students are receiving appropriate texts and supports in their courses. However, teachers noted that assessment data and student work are not typically used to revise curriculum. The self-study and teacher interviews indicate teachers and data teams are not provided opportunities to use student work and assessment data to revise curriculum. Because of this, the current curriculum and accompanying rubrics are not easily understood or accessible for all students. Regular and specific collaboration with curriculum coordinators to revise curriculum based on evidence of student mastery of content and achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning

expectations will improve school-wide instructional practices. (teacher interviews, student work, self-study)

Professional staff is currently reviewing grading and reporting practices at LHHS. The philosophical grading committee is currently researching standards-based grading protocol with the intent of implementing these practices within the next four years. The committee of ten teachers is currently piloting standards-based grading in their classrooms. This is the first year that teachers are required to report student progress toward the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. To report, teachers must update PowerSchool once a semester on a student's status in achieving the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Teachers and students indicate that grading practices within departments are not consistent. When grading and reporting practices are consistent between and within departments, there will be equity in grading practices that is completely aligned to the school's core values and beliefs about learning. (board of education, students, teacher interviews)

### **Commendations**

1. The use of teacher/department rubrics in most classes
2. The scheduled common planning time for most teachers during the school day
3. The time provided for all teachers to review assessment data on a monthly basis
4. The multiple and varied assessments utilized by the teaching staff
5. The feedback provided to students to improve student outcomes

### **Recommendations**

1. Design and implement a plan to ensure that common planning is utilized for its intended purpose of collaboration among teachers
2. Ensure that assessments provided for teachers are directly aligned to the curriculum
3. Examine ways to ensure that depth of feedback to students is consistent among departments and staff
4. Develop and implement a plan to ensure that assessment data and student work is utilized to revise curriculum
5. Review and resolve the inconsistencies in grading practices between and within departments

# **SUPPORT STANDARDS**

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**SCHOOL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP**

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**SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING**

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**COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING**

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# 5

## School Culture and Leadership

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

1. The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.
2. The school is equitable, inclusive, and fosters heterogeneity where every student over the course of the high school experience is enrolled in a minimum of one heterogeneously grouped core course (English/language arts, social studies, math, science, or world languages).
3. There is a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
4. In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff:
  - engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning
  - use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices
  - dedicate formal time to implement professional development
  - apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
5. School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning.
6. The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.
7. Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students.
8. The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.
9. Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.
10. Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning.
11. The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
12. The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school.

## Conclusions

The Lyman Hall High School (LHHS) community strives to build a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership and pride in the school. The LHHS student and parent planner includes the school's core value statement and the school-wide expectations for student learning. This planner includes the principal's expectations for student behavior inside and outside of school. Rules, regulations, procedures, and expectations for student behavior and attendance are outlined in this planner. The LHHS Core Values and Beliefs are posted throughout the school, in classrooms, and posted on the school's website. The Endicott survey reports that 68 percent of students, 84 percent of teachers, and 84 percent of parents believe that the school provides a safe, positive, and supportive culture. Also, students and parents, through interviews, overwhelmingly state they feel that LHHS is a safe and respectful school and that the school is driven by the core values statement. Comparing data from 2011-2012 to 2012-2013, school-wide discipline reports have dropped and overall student attendance has increased. LHHS participates in a Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports program (PBIS). In conjunction with PBIS, implementation of the Feathers Recognition program as part of the school-wide emphasis on positive student behavior through PRIDE (Polite-Responsibility-Independent-Diligent-Empathetic) was developed to recognize students for positive behavior and academic success as related to the school's core values and beliefs statement. Students demonstrate pride through participation in clubs, activities, and athletics. A thirty-hour community service graduation requirement reinforces the expectations for student learning. Open to all LHHS students are 47 clubs and activities and 25 sporting programs. Several of the clubs available to students are specifically focused on developing youth leadership skills and developing tolerance for others. Students participate in discussion through advisory activities that are focused on the school's core values and beliefs and address other initiatives in the school such as anti-bullying efforts. As a result of the myriad of programs aimed at promoting a positive culture, the school community consciously reflects the shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all. (self-study, Endicott survey, teacher interviews, students, parents, standard subcommittee, school support staff, central office personnel, classroom observations, self-study)

The school is equitable and inclusive in elective courses and in the newly implemented Contemporary Global Issues course to ensure access to challenging academic expectations for all students and to make certain that some courses are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. LHHS has introduced the first non-leveled core course (Contemporary Global Issues) that will be a graduation requirement for the Class of 2017. The mathematics department has eliminated two lower level mathematics courses and in an effort to address heterogeneity and equity, and has replaced these courses with a full-year algebra course that meets daily. According to the Endicott survey, 73 percent of students feel they have numerous opportunities to take courses with a diverse student population. The School Culture and Leadership Self-Study Committee undertook an examination of the English department grouping structure to determine whether or not inequity existed for students based on various ethnic and racial backgrounds. The committee, after examination of its data, concluded that no inequity existed. The LHHS Program of Studies indicates that there are up to five grouping levels for many core courses. Students are grouped into levels that staff and students indicate allow for maximum learning; teacher interviews indicate that heterogeneously grouped classes create positive interactions among peers and enhance learning in a manner that does not occur in leveled courses. Special education students follow an inclusion model and the self-study document states that special education students spend 80 percent or more of their time with regular education students. The implementation of non-leveled courses affords students an opportunity to achieve the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations in an equitable and inclusive environment. (self-study, standard subcommittee, students, program of studies, Endicott survey)

In addition to the school counselors, there is a formal ongoing program at LHHS through which each student has an adult in the school who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Established eight years ago, LHHS's advisory program meets weekly for thirty minutes to explore topics related to the school's learning expectations and to discuss matters of school or student concern. Each member of the professional staff at LHHS is assigned fifteen students and remains an advisor to these students through the four years of their high school career. The advisory committee plans the curriculum and either the advisor or students lead the developed activities. The goal of the advisory program is for students to create a sense of community and to develop a trusting relationship with an adult other than their school counselor. Activities include discussion of the school's core values and beliefs, bullying, and review of grades with the advisor after each grading term. During the 2014-2015 school year, junior advisories are assigned to freshman advisories with the goal of having the juniors support the freshmen in their first year of high school and for the freshmen to connect with upper class students. A pilot course, *The Capstone Experience*, enrolls about twenty heterogeneous students and is planned as a graduation requirement for all students in 2020. The Endicott survey reports that 71 percent of students agree that the advisory program provides personalization. As a result of all students at LHHS participating in the advisory program, students connect well with an adult in the school, other than their school counselor, which enables students to have a personalized educational experience. (self-study, standard subcommittee, students, Endicott survey)

In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff engage in professional discourse. They communicate collaboratively through department-based data teams which meet at least once a month. The data teams analyze student work. The teams' minutes are sent directly to the principal for review. The principal provides prompt feedback. Within these data teams there is intra-department collaboration. The self-study states that the results of assessments are used by members of the departments to link results to instructional practice and curriculum development. This type of collaboration was noted in a survey conducted by the staff at LHHS which concluded that 90 percent of the teachers agree that there is informal collaboration. In the recent past, professional development time has been used to update curriculum, analyze student data, and discuss department-specific topics. Since the implementation of a new teacher evaluation system, more professional development time has been dedicated to learning about this evaluation system and to meeting its requirements. Fifty-four percent of teachers indicate through the Endicott survey that professional development time is effective; however, the self-study indicates that teachers need more time to discuss how to apply the knowledge and skills acquired. The self-study states that due to a documented shortage of substitute teachers, district policy caps the number of staff approved for outside conferences at one percent per day. Allotting time and appropriate resources for reflection and implementation of professional learning will improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment at LHHS. (self-study, Endicott survey, teacher interviews, standard subcommittee meeting)

LHHS school leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning. School leaders previously used an evaluation plan focused on teacher professional growth action plans, informal and formal observations, and goals that were tied to the district goals. Beginning in the 2013-2014 school year, LHHS began utilizing the Connecticut System for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED). School leaders have participated in calibration training run by the local educational cooperative. Administrators were responsible for delineating SEED to the staff. Seventy-eight percent of teachers report that evaluator input on their student learning outcome (SLO) goals and indicators of student academic growth and development (IAGD) play an important role in improving their instructional practices. As a result of the evaluation framework required by the State of Connecticut, LHHS has in place a research-based evaluation and

supervision framework that focuses on student learning outcomes to ensure student success. (teachers, teacher interviews, self-study)

The organization of time at LHHS supports research-based instruction, some professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of the students. The schedule is a traditional A/B block schedule comprising of eighty-four minutes blocks. Teachers report that the time within the school day promotes student engagement, in-depth exploration of topics, and project-based learning. Each week, advisory meets for a thirty-minute period, helping to advance the school's core values and personalization of learning. Opportunities exist within the school day for students to attend peer tutoring. Recent adjustments to the school's daily schedule allow for many, but not all, departments to have common planning time which teachers report fosters collaboration within departments. Outside of the school day, some students' unique learning needs are met through a credit recovery program in mathematics and English. Special education students who have completed a four-year program transition to the Independent Community and Employment Training Program (ICE-T) program which provides authentic work experience at job sites throughout the area. Professional development that occurs during professional days allows for departments to meet in order to discuss student work. The self-study indicates that there is no formal mechanism to review the daily schedule and its impact on the school's core values and beliefs. As a result of how time is organized, the schedule is designed to support research-based instruction, the learning needs of students, and professional collaboration for most departments within the school. (self-study, teacher interviews, standard subcommittee)

Student load and class sizes are slightly above average according to state statistical data, but meet the needs of individual students. The average class size for core courses at LHHS is 25 for non-laboratory courses and 24 for lab courses. The LHHS Strategic School Profile from 2011-2012 lists average class size at 21. Teacher interviews and classroom observations confirm the Endicott survey results which indicate that class size allows for individualized instruction. Eighty percent of students and 66 percent of parents feel class sizes are reasonable. Scheduling by administration will, at times, exceed class size limits according to the self-study document. When this happens, school counselors do their best to balance sections to meet the needs of individual students. As a result, the majority of students, faculty, and parents agree that the student-teacher ratios support individual student needs, resulting in increased student achievement. (Strategic School Profile, Endicott survey, self-study, classroom observations, teacher interviews)

The principal, along with other building leaders, has a shared responsibility for the implementation of LHSS' Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations. The majority of students and staff report that the principal exemplifies the core value statement and is the primary role model in the school. The Endicott survey reports that 83 percent of students and 92 percent of faculty are very clear about the school's core values and beliefs as communicated and modeled by the principal. The principal's "open door policy" and constant visibility in the school and in the school community is popular with staff and students and creates a perception that each individual in the school community is valued. The principal makes educational decisions in collaboration with other leaders in the school through monthly cabinet and faculty meetings. He communicates with and considers feedback from the school's liaison committee and meets with parents through his attendance at the monthly parent teacher advisory committee (PTAC) meetings. Examples of the principal's instructional leadership as evidenced by teacher and standard committee interviews include facilitating faculty meetings that discusses educational issues such as the introduction and implementation of the SEED evaluation. Additionally, the principal provides personalized feedback to teachers as a result of their goal writing and observations. Teachers report that the primary vehicle for instructional leadership is their department chairperson (or district equivalent). A recent adjustment to the school's allocation of professional time now permits departments to have common planning time and results in increased opportunities for instructional leadership from department chairpersons. The assistant principals have

responsibilities that include student attendance, discipline, assemblies, scheduling, and student supervision. Each assistant principal is the educational leader for two departments that do not have department chairpersons. In conjunction with other building leaders, the principal provides instructional leadership that promotes joint ownership of the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. (self-study, students, parents, self-study, teacher interviews, Endicott survey, central office personnel, school support staff)

Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership. Evidence of the principal's accessibility and openness to feedback from students, parents, and teachers was apparent through student and teacher interviews. Through the liaison, technology, grading philosophy, school climate, and hiring committees, the teachers feel that their voices are being heard. According to the Endicott survey, 43 percent of students agree that they have input into important school decisions. The superintendent confirmed that he meets with student council members every other month ensuring that student feedback is valued. The numerous committees provide teacher input in the decision-making process. A collaborative hiring process for new administrative candidates within the district also includes teachers, parents, and students. Parents are encouraged to attend the PTAC meetings, which occur every other month in order to meet with the principal and discuss issues of importance to parents. In addition to collaborative hiring, the principal keeps parents updated through monthly newsletters and timely emails to ensure consistent communication. Data is also collected by administration through climate surveys that aid in the principal's decision-making process. The decision-making process at LHHS is thorough and defined based on the number of committees, school and district programs, and parental feedback. There is ample opportunity for faculty, students, and parents to be involved in the decision-making process at the school, resulting in a collaborative school environment that ensures student learning. (self-study, parents, teacher interviews, central office personnel, Endicott survey)

Teachers at LHHS exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and students' engagement in learning. There are many school committees, such as the advisory committee, school climate committee, technology committee, and departmental data teams that provide opportunities for teacher initiative and leadership. Data teams exist within each department and provide opportunities for teachers to examine student data and make recommendations for improvement. Teachers report that their recommendations for school improvement are positively received by school leadership, and substantive changes have occurred as a result. Examples include a school-wide field day, Unified Theater, Unified Sports, and the Feathers Recognition Program. Other leadership roles at the school exist for those who are department chairs or are members of the school's liaison committee or the innovation team. The liaison committee meetings are opportunities for teachers to raise concerns with administration. Innovation team members have contributed to the implementation of the credit recovery program and the capstone course as part of their goal of increasing student engagement. The wide variety of teacher-based committees and teams have resulted in new initiatives and many opportunities for students to engage in new learning which will result in the acquisition of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills. (self-study, teacher interviews, standard subcommittee)

The relationship between the school board, superintendent, and principal is collaborative, reflective, and constructive as evidenced by discussions with the school board and the superintendent. The board of education in Wallingford Public Schools is comprised of nine individuals who meet formally and informally with the superintendent. Board of education members state that collaboration among the superintendent, the board of education, and the principal is supportive of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The School Culture and Leadership Committee conducted a five-question survey to measure the collaboration of the superintendent, board of education, and principal. Results suggest a strong level of trust and collaboration. The superintendent was very clear about open

discussion between himself and board of education members. The superintendent's message to the community is based on the book *Mindset* by Dr. Carol Dweck. The concepts of the book *Mindset* generate Common Core values and beliefs for everyone who lives and works in Wallingford. As a result, the collaborative and reflective efforts of the board of education, superintendent, and principal allow for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations to be achieved by the entire school community. (self-study, central office personnel, board of education)

The principal is given sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. According to meetings with board of education members, the school board and superintendent allow the principal to allocate budgetary funds throughout the school. He was also given the autonomy to create a five-year education transformation/reformation plan for the school. According to the self-study, the principal applied for and received a Carl D. Perkins Innovation Grant, which expands Naviance use, thereby aiding in the planning and implementation of student success plans for all students. The grant funds were also used to hire career and technical education staff. In addition to budgetary responsibilities, the standard committee states that the principal was instrumental in overseeing committees involved in improving student learning. Because the principal is provided sufficient decision-making authority to run the daily and long-term operations of the school, his leadership decisions are responsive to the needs of the school. (self-study, central office personnel, board of education, standard subcommittee)

### **Commendations**

1. The positive school climate and successful implementation of the school's core values and beliefs
2. The advisory program that supports the implementation of the school's core values and beliefs and personalization of the student educational experience
3. The introduction of the Contemporary Global Issues core academic requirement that increases heterogeneity in an academic core subject area
4. The organization of time within the block schedule that supports instruction
5. The role of the principal in the implementation of the school's core values and beliefs
6. The opportunities for teacher leadership through committee membership and data team analysis
7. The ample opportunity for faculty, students, and parents to be involved in the decision-making process

### **Recommendations**

1. Increase the opportunities for students to take heterogeneous courses to ensure that all courses are equitable and inclusive
2. Develop a school-wide professional development plan that addresses professional needs as determined by the principal and the school leadership team
3. Allow for greater flexibility of resources for teachers to access meaningful professional development opportunities

## 6

**School Resources for Learning**

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

1. The school has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
2. The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services.
3. Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.
4. School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - deliver a written, developmental program
  - meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling
  - engage in individual and group meetings with all students
  - deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers
  - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
5. The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - provide preventative health services and direct intervention services
  - use an appropriate referral process
  - conduct ongoing student health assessments
  - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
6. Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum
  - provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum
  - ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school
  - are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning
  - conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.

7. Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
- collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
  - provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students
  - perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.



## Conclusions

Lyman Hall High School provides a number of timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students that support each student's achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. All students at Lyman Hall High School have the opportunity to connect with members of the staff and their peers through advisories, which are designed to incorporate and implement the school's core values and beliefs and expectations for student learning as well as for students to engage in social opportunities to build a sense of community among classmates. Additionally, during study halls any student can access the Peer Tutoring Program, comprised of students from both the National Honor Society and a pool of student volunteers, to meet individually for study support in core academic subjects. Various counseling services, for example, grief counseling, short-term counseling, group counseling, and conflict resolution are available to all students through the school counseling office and the social worker in support of their 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The Student Assistance Team (SAT), facilitated by the school psychologist and school social worker, consists of teachers, administrators, school counselors, and the school nurse who, on a weekly basis, discuss students at-risk. Students at risk are identified by failing grades, crisis reports, or discipline referrals. Students at-risk who are identified by their eighth grade school counselors are offered the Bridge Academy where they spend time over the summer before ninth grade working on subject-specific needs to assist with a successful transition to high school and to help students develop their ability to achieve the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Students identified as at-risk based upon low standardized test scores on incoming ninth grade exams have access to both reading and/or math intervention services. These intervention classes are typically offered at the ninth grade level. Teachers in grades ten through twelve have expressed the desire to provide students in upper grades the opportunity to benefit from ELA, social studies, math, and/or science intervention services during the school day as needed in ensuring that at-risk and struggling students develop the reading, writing, and math skills necessary to meet the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Minimal opportunities exist for out-of-district students to access interventions and supports after school as transportation is only provided during the regular school day by sending schools. Students identified with a disability and who receive services under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) have access to various special education supports, interventions, and services through their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) such as structured study halls, learning strategies lab, specialized instruction in core academics, life skills, independent community and employment training program (ICE-T), vocational education, and peers supporting peers internship. Likewise, students with identified disabilities receive accommodations under Section 504 in order to access the general education curriculum. The myriad of intervention strategies that address the complex needs of at-risk students, identified special education students, and students under a 504 Plan enhance and support student success in achieving 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (self-study, teacher interviews, panel presentation, student work)

Lyman Hall High School provides many opportunities for families, especially those in need, to gain information about available student support services. According to the Endicott survey, 73.6 percent of parents agree that LHHS provides timely, regular, and pertinent information to families. Parents and guardians receive information through the following avenues: email, automated phone calls, Wallingford Public Schools' website, Lyman Hall High School's website, mailings, student planners, LHHS Program of Studies, PowerSchool, local access television channel, LHHS principal's notes, and the Parent Teacher Advisory Council (PTAC). Parents of students who receive special education support services under an IEP and accommodations under a 504 Plan receive annual notification of meetings through invitations mailed home and subsequent U.S. Postal mailings of copies of IEPs and 504 Plans. Parents and teacher interviews confirm that special education teachers, school counselors, and general education teachers call and email parents and guardians with concerns as they arise. Parents and guardians have access to students' grades and attendance records through

PowerSchool which allows the parents/guardians to remain apprised of their students' performance. The aforementioned modes of parent communication have allowed Lyman Hall High School to maintain contact with parents/guardians regarding grades, attendance, student progress, and important information about the school, which support student achievement and success. (self-study, student work parents, teacher interviews)

Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for students. Special education case managers employ many assistive technologies to support students. The school nurse uses PowerSchool to maintain and communicate student health needs. However, the School Nurse Assistant Program (SNAP) which interfaces with PowerSchool and provides comprehensive medical documentation is not currently available. Health information is provided on the district's webpage. The library media center has adequate computer facilities, and offers online databases, e-books, and a web-accessible catalog. Media center records and reporting are handled electronically through Destiny. The school counseling department utilizes Naviance for college and career-readiness instruction and record-keeping, and PowerSchool is used for students and parents to access their grades, schedules, and credits. A Google form was used to consolidate input from SAT members. Counselors have Chromebooks available to work directly with students online. Pupil personnel services provide information, procedures, and schedules on the district's website. Special education staff use IEP Direct to develop and maintain IEPs. Credit recovery is offered using Odysseyware, an online program. According to the self-study, the nurse reports additional record-keeping and tracking software is needed to provide better data collection and reporting for health services. Through the use of a variety of technologies, support services staff members provide individualized services to the majority of LHHS students resulting in an effective range of coordinated services. (self-study, school support staff, school website facility tour, student work)

Lyman Hall High School counseling department has an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel. There is a full-time clerk who works under the direction of the school counseling director; however, interviews with the school counseling department members and the self-study report indicate that there is a need for additional support in this area to meet the numerous clerical demands of this large school counseling office. There are five counselors in the school counseling department who serve 1,135 students at Lyman Hall High School. The average student-to-counselor ratio is 250:1, which aligns with the American School Counselor Association recommendation. The school counseling department has a written developmental program implemented in individual sessions, through advisories, and in small group settings which supports the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. School counselors do not meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career and college counseling. Rather they report that they typically meet with students one to two times per year. Most students in ninth and tenth grades report that they meet with their school counselors one time per year for course selection. Students in eleventh and twelfth grades typically meet with their school counselor two times per year, once for post-secondary planning and the other for course selection. The counseling department utilizes Naviance, a program that fosters career exploration and development of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, to implement student success plans (SSPs). Naviance offers a variety of activities, assessments, resources, and planning guides to assist students in planning for their future. Additionally, LHHS has a part-time college and career counselor who works with students on future planning two days per week. School counseling staff members deliver outreach and referral to community and area mental health care agencies and social services providers, as evidenced by brochures and handouts listing contact information for counselors, psychologists, treatment clinics, family services, pediatricians, etc. The principal's monthly newsletter occasionally offers recommendations for family services. There is no evidence that contact information for mental health and social service providers is available on the school's website. School counseling staff offers limited opportunities to collect relevant data and feedback from families to drive program improvements. An online parent survey was given to families to rate satisfaction with regard to school

climate and counseling services. According to parents and students, additional opportunities for counselors to meet with students would ensure more personalized academic, career, and college counseling. Further data collection from the school community and additional individual counseling opportunities that engage all students will allow counselors to implement programming and will result in more personalization as students strive to achieve the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (student work school support staff, students, self-study)

With the addition of a nurse's assistant in September 2014, health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff. However, it was reported that this position will be reduced to two days per week beginning in December 2014. One registered nurse provides direct intervention services on a daily basis, totaling 3,725 visits during the 2012-2013 school year. The diverse nature of the programming offered at LHHS (working with animals, outdoor equipment, a restaurant, automotive and woodworking) means a wide variety of potential injuries. Preventative screenings for vision and scoliosis are conducted and teacher training is adequately offered, such as Epipen training, blood borne pathogens protocols, defibrillator use, and recognizing child abuse/neglect. Appropriate referrals are made to counseling staff within the school and also to state and community agencies. Ongoing assessment of student health is provided by tenth grade physicals. In addition, the nurse continually monitors students with ongoing health issues such as diabetes, epilepsy, depression, etc. The health office uses PowerSchool to maintain and report student health data to faculty and parents, but does not collect community feedback or directly disseminate information to the community. Forty-four percent of parents agree on the Endicott survey that health service personnel provide preventative and intervention services. Greater assistance in the health suite will provide more time for the nurse to adequately handle daily demands and to collect more data to improve the delivery of health services to the students. (student work, self-study, school support staff, standard subcommittee)

Library media services are partially integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff, a library media specialist and one full time assistant. The school's information literacy curriculum is embedded in subject-specific assignments, such as the use of online databases for social studies research, but there are no assured experiences to assess that skills, such as research, source evaluation, or citing of sources are taught, and the media specialist does not assess student work. Only 55 percent of staff members agree that library personnel assist in implementation of curriculum. The media specialist attends monthly cabinet meetings with department heads and administration to stay abreast of school initiatives and instructional changes. The facility is available fifteen minutes before the start of the school day and for one hour after school, Monday through Thursday. The after-school hours are staffed by the library aide. Study hall students are permitted to use the media center during their study halls if they have a pass from a subject area teacher. However, due to the size of the library, students are limited to coming to the media center every other day. The library provides a comprehensive range of print books, e-books, videos, online research databases, web-based citation generators, Turnitin plagiarism checker, and other information services support the school's curriculum and teachers' instructional needs; this is confirmed in the Endicott survey by the 78 percent of students who agree. Books are provided at a variety of reading levels to support the IRLA (Independent Reading Level Assessment) initiative. The media specialist creates displays and bulletin boards, assists with book selection, runs the summer reading program, and facilitates the library media internships. The media specialist does not conduct ongoing assessment to collect relevant data and feedback from the school or community to improve services. A book suggestion link is offered on the website and some student feedback is gathered through the internships. This year, a computerized sign-in sheet was implemented so the media specialist can better track student attendance and usage. Using ongoing assessment data and gathering feedback from the school community along with increasing collaboration between the media specialist and teachers to develop and co-teach lessons that integrate information literacy skills will better ensure

the implementation of the ILS curriculum. (self-study, students, teacher interviews, school website, student work)

The Lyman Hall High School support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide opportunities for students to access and attain LHHS's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Forty-three percent of parents agree that the school has an adequate number of certified/licensed and support services personnel for identified students, including special education, 504, and English language learners. However, some staff members have indicated that they believe that there are an inadequate number of certified special education personnel. The school has eight special education teachers, one full-time and one part-time school psychologist, two social workers, one full-time and one part-time speech and language pathologist, thirteen full-time paraprofessionals, one part-time paraprofessional, access to the district-wide occupational therapist and physical therapist as required per the IEP, and three job coaches and a transition coordinator who share their time with the second high school in the district in the ICE-T program. There is a paraprofessional who provides assistance with clerical work for up to three hours per week in the special education department. There are roughly 157 students identified for special education at LHHS and teachers report that much time is spent performing clerical tasks associated with the IEP and Planning and Placement Team (PPT) process, infringing on valuable instructional, co-teaching, collaboration, and student support time. Results of the Endicott survey indicate that 66 percent of staff at LHHS agrees that support services personnel collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff to achieve the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Evidence of collaboration between general education and special education teachers include co-teaching with general education content area teachers in math, English, social studies, and science; maintaining open lines of communication and collaboration between the case manager and the student's general education teacher regarding classroom performance, accommodations, modifications, and development and distribution of the alert sheets, which inform the general education teachers about the student's accommodations and modifications, strengths, weaknesses; and service providers. Additionally, special education teachers and general education teachers collaborate in the planning and implementation of the students' IEPs through the Planning and Placement Team (PPT). At LHHS, related service professionals collaborate with teachers, school counselors, and other support personnel as needed; however, support services personnel and teachers report that lack of common collaboration time, large caseloads, clerical duties, and lack of transition support services for students not in the ICE-T program inhibit ongoing consistent and effective planning, communication, collaboration, and implementation of services. Teachers at LHHS strive to provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students through participation in co-taught classes, paraprofessional support in general education classes when necessary, inclusion in general education classes, Peers Supporting Peers (a credit bearing experience), Unified Sports, Unified Theater, peer tutors, and the ICE-T program. According to the Endicott survey, 40 percent of staff members agree that all support services personnel use assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Support services personnel self report that as a department they have recently made changes in response to the use of assessment data to improve support services and to ensure that each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Based on the results from the Special Education Program Review for Wallingford Public Schools, the LHHS special education teachers self report that more professional development is required to improve the quality of IEP goals by increasing measurability, using curriculum-based or standardized test results, district created rubrics for specific skills building, as well as incorporating pre-assessments and post-assessments. While programs for identified students adequately support the majority of students, inconsistencies in support services do not ensure that all students achieve the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (self-study, student work, teacher interviews, leadership team interviews, standard subcommittee)

## **Commendations**

1. The coordinated, directed intervention services
2. The effective communication with staff, families, and students by the special education department
3. The Peers Supporting Peers internship and peer tutoring
4. The varied use of technology in all departments to support school programs
5. The implementation of the written developmental guidance curriculum
6. The successful health service provided by the nurse
7. The student library internships which allow students to practice many of the school's expectations for student learning

## **Recommendations**

1. Provide staff professional development on techniques for assessing library/information skills
2. Increase data collection in counseling, special education, health services and library from families and the community to drive improvements in specialized programs
3. Explore the acquisition of software to supplement PowerSchool to assist in student medical documentation
4. Include electronic access to resources for families looking for mental health, substance abuse, and/or family counseling
5. Increase opportunities for students to meet personally with their school counselors
6. Review the current intervention program to determine if it can be expanded to other grade levels and subject areas
7. Analyze the need for appropriate staffing in special education



## Community Resources for Learning

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

1. The community and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for:
  - a wide range of school programs and services
  - sufficient professional and support staff
  - ongoing professional development and curriculum revision
  - a full range of technology support
  - sufficient equipment
  - sufficient instructional materials and supplies.
2. The school develops, plans, and funds programs:
  - to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant
  - to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment
  - to keep the school clean on a daily basis.
3. The community funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses:
  - programs and services
  - enrollment changes and staffing needs
  - facility needs
  - technology
  - capital improvements.
4. Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget.
5. The school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services.
6. The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.
7. All professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school.
8. The school develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning.

## Conclusions

The community and the district's governing body with additional support from outside community sources, provide dependable funding for a wide range of school programs and services, sufficient equipment, and sufficient instructional materials and supplies. A custodial service company is under contract to conduct housekeeping activities, which allows the school custodial staff to concentrate on building maintenance. Central office staff and teachers indicate that a recent increase in technology through awarded grants, including document cameras, updated computer labs, and Chromebooks, has led to an increased need in information technology (IT) support staff. Only thirty-one percent of staff members feel that support for technology is adequately funded. Additional IT support staff and professional development will lead to an increased integration of technology and therefore provide students with more meaningful and authentic delivery of curriculum. (teacher interviews, maintenance job description, facility tour, self-study)

Wallingford Public Schools develops, plans, and funds programs so Lyman Hall High School is able to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment, and keep a clean school environment. The district bar-code system ensures all equipment over three hundred dollars is accounted for on a yearly basis. The school has an intranet system for staff to electronically submit requests for repair of facilities and equipment. All on-site equipment has adequate storage and is kept in ready-to-use condition. The head custodian plans annual major upkeep of heavy use areas of the building (gym floor, painting, lighting). Appropriated space is allocated to ensure storage and access of replacement filters for the HVAC system. When the Endicott survey was conducted, 60 percent of teachers believed that the building was neither clean nor well maintained; however, teachers now agree that the new custodial service company consistently cleans the facility. The established plans and procedures for regular maintenance and upkeep enable the school to properly assess building needs, leading to a clean environment for the student body and staff. (facility tour, head custodian, principal, Endicott survey, self-study)

The community funds a long-range plan that addresses programs and services, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements. The board of education budget indicates an increase in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014. The mayor of Wallingford proposed \$577,268 for school safety upgrades, and \$146,000 for school code mandates in 2013-2014 and \$350,000 in 2014-2015 funded by appropriations from the Connecticut Resource and Recovery Authority (CRRRA) distribution funds. The newer agriscience facility was funded by the Connecticut Agricultural Science and Technology Education (ASTE) Grant (95 percent) and the board of education (5 percent). In addition, the Wallingford Education Foundation (WEF) funds various projects; for example, The Cooks' Table restaurant décor and the Healthy Drive Food Truck. The CRRRA, ASTE, and WEF are separate from the school budget. The fidelity to which the long-range plan is implemented is unclear. While the Wallingford Public Schools Strategic School Plan for 2011-2016 has a goal to complete capital improvement projects, including athletic fields, it does not specify improvements to Lyman Hall High School (LHHS), nor the dates of completion. The track at LHHS has not been renovated in over 20 years and continues to show signs of wear. The softball field's infield does not drain. The development of an articulated plan for capital improvements with projected dates of completion will clarify and remedy school projects, programs, and services resulting in increased effectiveness in all classrooms and school spaces. (school budgets, Town of Wallingford budgets, school support staff, teachers, students)

Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget. Within a department, faculty members are able to submit their needs for the next fiscal year. Any additional instructional materials not initially accounted for through this process can be requested through department chairs. The requests are usually fulfilled by the principal.

Many faculty members are unclear how to communicate needs of the school to the central office, which would be instrumental in the planning of future budgets. However, the superintendent provides opportunities for input from the faculty, parents, and students at budget forum meetings. The faculty and building administrators are involved in the development of department and building budgets, but when more concrete channels of communication between and among all stakeholders are implemented, a more sound process of budget development will result. (teacher interviews, Endicott survey, self-study, superintendent)

The school site and plant generally supports the delivery of high quality school programs and services. The building is sufficient in size with the majority of teachers having their own classrooms. The building's heating and ventilation system has been improved, but teachers and students still report extremely cold spaces including the main office and counseling suite. Teachers indicate the gymnasium and athletics facilities are small and do not meet needs for year-round instruction. Both students and staff indicate a need for improved facilities, including a larger gymnasium, athletics fields, corridors, ceiling tiles, windows, and Heating Ventilation and Cooling (HVAC) systems. Outdoor facilities, especially the track, are in need of repair. Continued renovations to the facility in the areas of grounds, building, HVAC, and physical education will expand and improve the quality of instruction. (self-study, facility tour, students, teacher interviews)

The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations. All science labs and student-operated equipment are tagged with current inspection certificates. Mechanical facilities and equipment, including the original 1957 equipment, is properly maintained and documented. Fire extinguishers and automated external defibrillators are inspected on a regular basis per code. All material safety data sheets are readily available. Food preparation and instructional areas are clean. Equipment is properly inspected and tagged. Maintaining and updating proper documentation ensures that Lyman Hall will continually meet federal and state fire, health, and safety regulations. (facility tour, head custodian, principal, Endicott survey, self-study)

Professional staff actively engages parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school. The school provides several opportunities for parent engagement, including an open house, the four parent-teacher conferences, eighth grade curriculum night, post-secondary planning nights, college fairs, and other activities and events. Additionally, PowerSchool, emails, websites, and mailings are used to inform parents and families on a regular basis. Teachers maintain communication logs when they contact home allowing them to track efforts. For example, the school arranged for a sign language interpreter for hearing-impaired parents, who previously were not participating in school activities. School counselors, social workers, psychologists, a school youth officer, and an open-choice liaison employ various methods to contact families who have been less connected. The professional staff engages all students and families, in varied venues, to ensure that each family has the opportunity to feel connected to and supported by the school. (teacher interviews, parents, self-study)

The school develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning. The new agricultural science wing has taken steps to involve the public. This department has developed partnerships with local farmers and businesses, which enable student exposure to real world trade applications. HUBCAP Wallingford is a cooperative opportunity with a local business owner who allows students to work at maintaining a business space in central downtown Wallingford. This business front enables entrepreneurial start-ups an opportunity to grow and establish a foothold while exposing students to the many facets of the business process. The school has higher education partnerships including Advanced Placement courses, Early College Experience through the University of Connecticut, and Gateway Community College courses.



Volunteering is a requirement for graduation which allows students to give back to their community and grow as individuals. The Fright Trail provides a fundraising and volunteer opportunity for the high school. The school partners with the Spanish community of Wallingford with outreaches to Spanish speaking families to broaden their understanding and involvement with their children's education. The use of PowerSchool, Remind 101, e-mail blasts, and paper mailings enable the school to inform all families of their students' current standing with their education. Lyman Hall High School continues to foster productive parent, community, and business partnerships, which support student learning and individual development, resulting in effective school and community relations. (principal, program of studies, students, teacher interviews, school's website, self-study)

### **Commendations**

1. The proactive and continual procurement of grant and community funding for capital improvement, technology, and other programming
2. The active and ongoing maintenance and supervision of the grounds and building
3. The regular communication with students and families that provide opportunities for school and community engagement
4. The partnerships with higher education and opportunities for students to volunteer in the community

### **Recommendations**

1. Develop and publish an articulated plan for capital improvements at Lyman Hall High School with projected dates of completion
2. Articulate to faculty their role in the budgetary process and ways for individual teachers to identify budgetary needs
3. Ensure new technology is supported through professional development and provide on-site technology personnel

## FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

This comprehensive evaluation report reflects the findings of the school's self-study and those of the visiting committee. It provides a blueprint for the faculty, administration, and other officials to use to improve the quality of programs and services for the students in Lyman Hall High School. The faculty, school board, and superintendent should be apprised by the building administration yearly of progress made addressing visiting committee recommendations.

Since it is in the best interest of the students that the citizens of the district become aware of the strengths and limitations of the school and suggested recommendations for improvement, the Committee requires that the evaluation report be made public in accordance with the Committee's Policy on Distribution, Use, and Scope of the Visiting Committee Report.

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

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Committee has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Committee within sixty days (60) of occurrence any substantive change which negatively impacts on the school's adherence to the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. The report of substantive change must describe the change itself and detail any impact which the change has had on the school's ability to meet the Standards for Accreditation. The Committee's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix on page 52. All other substantive changes should be included in the Two- and Five-Year Progress Reports and/or the Annual Report which is required of each member school to ensure that the Committee office has current statistical data on the school.

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

In closing, the members of the visiting team wish to express their appreciation to the entire school staff, students, and community of Lyman Hall High School for the hospitality that was extended to the team during its visit to the school. The team found all members of the school community welcoming, eager to participate in the work of the visiting team, and unified by their common goal to improve Lyman Hall High School.

**Lyman Hall High School  
NEASC Accreditation Visit  
November 16-19, 2014**

**Visiting Committee**

<p>Paul Daigle, Chair Retired Superintendent New England Association of Schools and Colleges Burlington, MA 01803</p> <p>Corey Evans, Assistant Chair Oxford High School Oxford, CT 06478</p> <p>Adam Apicella Coventry High School Coventry, CT 06238</p> <p>Tanya Bernard Warren Harding High School Bridgeport, CT 06610</p> <p>Taryn Fernandez Nonnewaug High School Woodbury High School Woodbury, CT 06238</p> <p>Timothy Fioravanti Waterford High School Waterford, CT 06385</p> <p>Andrea Howey Simsbury High School Simsbury, CT 06070</p> <p>Rebecca Isaacson Middletown High School Middletown, CT 06457</p>	<p>Glen Kallinch Francis T. Maloney High School Meriden, CT 06450</p> <p>Rosemary LoStocco Edwin O. Smith High School Storrs, CT 06268</p> <p>Colleen McMorran Naugatuck High School Naugatuck, CT 06770</p> <p>Lisa Olivere Woodland Regional High School Beacon Falls, CT 06403</p> <p>Deborah Witek Strange Wolcott High School Wolcott, CT 06716</p> <p>William Turner Ledyard High School Ledyard, CT 06339</p> <p>Jim Wisniewski Ledyard High School Ledyard, CT 06339</p> <p>Matthew Wlodarczyk Newington Public Schools Newington, CT 06111</p>
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## NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS &amp; COLLEGES

## Committee on Public Secondary Schools

## SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

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

## Lyman Hall High School

### Commendations

#### Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

1. The culture of the school that is driven by the core values and beliefs
2. The adequate research and collaboration to develop core values, beliefs, and learning expectations
3. The development of analytic rubrics that address defined learning expectations using clear terminology
4. The variety of course offerings and organizations that reflect Lyman Hall's Core Values and Beliefs
5. The challenging, measurable 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations that address academic, civic, and social competencies
6. The prominent printed display of Lyman Hall's Core Values, Beliefs, Learning Expectations and PRIDE that are visible throughout the building

#### Curriculum

1. The dedication and pride of the teachers in their delivery of the curriculum
2. The format of the curriculum template that has recently been modified to include specific reference to standards, authentic learning opportunities, and a variety of assessments, including performance-based assessments
3. The teachers who are reflective in their practice and welcome opportunities to collaborate on curriculum revision and are willing to offer more opportunities for students to demonstrate their skills

#### Instruction

1. The teachers' instructional practices that support the achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
2. The students' familiarity with and understanding of the community contributor, collaboration, and self-direction learning expectations
3. The students' application of their learning to authentic tasks
4. The increased use of technology as an effective instructional tool in all curricular areas
5. The availability of extra help for students before, during, and after school
6. The use of student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments by most teachers
7. The use of feedback from students and teachers to improve instructional practices
8. The dedicated faculty pursuit of knowledge in their content-area through reading journals, attending conferences and reflecting upon their practices

#### Assessment of and for Student Learning

1. The use of teacher/department rubrics in most classes

2. The scheduled common planning time for most teachers during the school day
3. The time provided for all teachers to review assessment data on a monthly basis
4. The multiple and varied assessments utilized by the teaching staff
5. The feedback provided to students to improve student outcomes

### School Culture and Leadership

1. The positive school climate and successful implementation of the school's core values and beliefs
2. The advisory program that supports the implementation of the school's core values and beliefs and personalization of the student educational experience
3. The introduction of the Contemporary Global Issues core academic requirement that increases heterogeneity in an academic core subject area
4. The organization of time within the block schedule that supports instruction
5. The role of the principal in the implementation of the school's core values and beliefs
6. The opportunities for teacher leadership through committee membership and data team analysis
7. The ample opportunity for faculty, students, and parents to be involved in the decision-making process

### School Resources for Learning

1. The coordinated, directed intervention services
2. The effective communication with staff, families and students by the Special Education department
3. The Peers Supporting Peers internship and peer tutoring
4. The varied use of technology in all departments to support school programs
5. The implementation of the written developmental guidance curriculum
6. The successful health service provided by the nurse
7. The student library internships which allow students to practice many of the school's Expectations for Student Learning

### Community Resources for Learning

1. The proactive and continual procurement of grant and community funding for capital improvement, technology and other programming
2. The active and ongoing maintenance and supervision of the grounds and building
3. The regular communication with students and families that provide opportunities for school and community engagement
4. The partnerships with higher education and opportunities for students to volunteer in the community

## Recommendations

### Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

1. Develop and consistently employ methods to clarify and reinforce student, parent, and community awareness of the core values and beliefs
2. Implement a process to regularly review student progress in developing 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that includes students, teachers, parents, and district curriculum directors

### Curriculum

1. Review and revise the leveling structure of courses as a means to ensure that the written curriculum is implemented for all students
2. Develop and initiate a plan to increase collaborative planning time
3. Create a shared vision and plan for the district-wide continued writing and revision of curriculum for all content areas
4. Design and implement curriculum that includes instructional practices that utilize technology to engage students in the higher order, student-centered activities required for achieving 21<sup>st</sup> century skills
5. Conduct a review of current library/media resources to ensure that curriculum needs are supported

### Instruction

1. Develop a shared understanding of personalized instruction
2. Provide opportunity for an emphasis on the creation and implementation of cross-disciplinary connections
3. Develop a procedure to determine specific faculty professional learning needs and provide meaningful professional development based on current research to improve instructional practices in all areas, including support services

### Assessment of and for Student Learning

1. Design and implement a plan to ensure that common planning is utilized for its intended purpose
2. Ensure that assessments provided for teachers are directly aligned to the curriculum
3. Examine ways to ensure that depth of feedback to students is consistent among departments and staff
4. Develop and implement a plan to ensure that assessment data and student work is utilized to revise curriculum
5. Review and resolve the inconsistencies in grading practices between and within departments

### School Culture and Leadership

1. Increase the opportunities for students to take heterogeneous courses to ensure that all courses are equitable and inclusive

2. Develop a school-wide professional development plan that addresses professional needs as determined by the principal and the school leadership team
3. Allow for greater flexibility of resources for teachers to access meaningful professional development opportunities

### School Resources for Learning

1. Provide staff professional development on techniques for assessing library/information skills
2. Increase data collection in counseling, special education, health services and library from families and the community to drive improvements in specialized programs
3. Explore the acquisition of software to supplement PowerSchool to assist in student medical documentation
4. Include electronic access to resources for families looking for mental health, substance abuse and/or family counseling
5. Increase opportunities for students to meet personally with their school counselors
6. Review the current intervention program to determine if it can be expanded to other grade levels and subject areas
7. Analyze the need for appropriate staffing in special education

### Community Resources for Learning

1. Develop and publish an articulated plan for capital improvements at Lyman Hall High School with projected dates of completion
2. Articulate to faculty their role in the budgetary process and ways for individual teachers to identify budgetary needs
3. Ensure new technology is supported through professional development and provide on-site technology personnel