



NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.
COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

for

Mark T. Sheehan High School

Wallingford, CT

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11/15/2015 - 11/18/2015

STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

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

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

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

The Committee on Public Secondary School's Standards for Accreditation serve as the foundation for the accreditation process and by which accreditation decisions are made. The seven Standards are qualitative, challenging, and reflect current research and best practice. The Standards, written and approved by the membership, establish the components of schools to ensure an effective and appropriate focus on teaching and learning and the support of teaching and learning.

Teaching and Learning Standards

Core Values and Beliefs About Learning

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of and for Student Learning

Support Standards

School Culture and Leadership

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning

CORE VALUES, BELIEFS, AND LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Teaching and Learning Standard

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 21st 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 21st 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 21st 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 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school community priorities.

CURRICULUM

Teaching and Learning Standard

The written and taught curriculum is designed to result in all students achieving the school's 21st century expectations for student learning. The written curriculum is the framework within which a school aligns and personalizes the school's 21st 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 21st 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 21st 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.

INSTRUCTION

Teaching and Learning Standard

The quality of instruction is the single most important factor in students' achievement of the school's 21st 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 21st century learning expectations.
2. Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st 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.

ASSESSMENT OF AND FOR STUDENT LEARNING

Teaching and Learning Standard

Assessment informs students and stakeholders of progress and growth toward meeting the school's 21st 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 21st century learning expectations.
2. The school's professional staff communicates:
 - individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families
 - the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st 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 21st 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 21st 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.

SCHOOL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

Support Standard

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 and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
3. There is a formal, on-going program(s) or process(es) 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 21st 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 21st century learning expectations.
12. The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school.

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Support Standard

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 21st 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 21st 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 21st 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 21st 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 21st 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 21st 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 21st century learning expectations.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Support Standard

The achievement of the school's 21st 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.

School and Community Summary

School and Community Summary

Mark T. Sheehan High School, in Wallingford, Connecticut, is conveniently located in New Haven county between the cities of Hartford and New Haven, with easy access to Interstate 91 and the Wilbur Cross Parkway. In 2012, the population of Wallingford was 45,074 people. The town's population growth has been approximately 0.5 percent per year over the last ten years, and this growth mirrors the population growth rate of the state of Connecticut for the same period. The per capita income for 2011 was \$32,896 for 17,506 households. The racial/ethnic breakdown of the town's total population is as follows: White: 41,109; African American: 636; Asian Pacific: 1,255; Native American: 142; Hispanic: 4,596. The Hispanic population has doubled in the past fifteen years. The 2012 poverty rate in Wallingford was six percent, which has nearly doubled since 2000 but is lower the statewide poverty rate of ten percent. During the 2014-2015 school year, 10.7 percent of Sheehan students were eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch.

Over the past ten years, Wallingford has diversified its commercial and industrial base, attracting high technology industries as compared to traditional heavy manufacturing. Major businesses and industries in Wallingford include Quest Laboratories, Masonicare, Gaylord Specialty Hospital, the Toyota Oakdale Theater, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Cytex Industries, and Ulbrich Steel and Speciality Metals. The community offers a wide range of shopping, from Wal-Mart to personal service-oriented and family-owned stores. The town-wide unemployment rate for 2013 was 7.2 percent, slightly lower than the state average of 7.8 percent.

The Wallingford school district is comprised of twelve schools: four schools serving kindergarten through second grade, four schools serving grades of third through fifth, two middle schools (grades 6-8), and two high schools (grades 9-12). Two alternative education programs are available for students: ARTS (Alternative Route to Success) and EEP (Educational Enhancement Program). The Educational Center for the Arts (ECA), a regional magnet school located in New Haven run by Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES), provides a fine arts program for Wallingford high school students who are accepted. Choate Rosemary Hall, a prestigious independent boarding school, also is located in Wallingford.

The October 1, 2014 enrollment at Sheehan High School was 854 students divided between 416 males and 438 females. For students, the attendance rate on October 1, 2013 was 97.3 percent and on October 1, 2012 was 95.0 percent. The average number of days teachers were absent during the 2011-2012 school year was 7.5 days, which is below the average of 8.6 days for Connecticut high schools.

The per pupil expenditure in 2013 was \$13,226, compared to the state per pupil expenditure of \$14,031. In the 2009-10 school year, 68.3 percent of the school's funding came from local sources, 23.4 percent from state funds, 6.7 percent federal grants, and 1.7 percent from tuition fees. The school budget in 2013-2014 was \$96,736,331. The school board budget was 65.6 percent of the town budget in 2013-2014. In addition, during the 2013-2104 school year the district obtained \$779,272 in grant money and received \$170,325 in charitable donations.

At Mark T. Sheehan High School, the cohort four-year graduation rate for the class of 2014 was 96 percent and the annual dropout rate for grades 9-12 was 0.04 percent. This dropout rate is considerably lower than the state average of 2.1 percent. For the class of 2014, 71 percent went to four-year colleges, 17 percent went to two-year colleges, four percent entered the military, and three percent went directly to employment.

The Superintendent of Schools actively pursues local business partnerships. Businesses and organizations participate in panel presentations for students. During the 2013-2014 school year, the Wallingford Public Schools hired a career center specialist to focus on many initiatives regarding community connections, including job fairs, panel presentations, and coordination of the school system with HUBCAP. HUBCAP, a hybrid-business

incubator, provides a unique opportunity for collaboration between businesses and the local school district. HUBCAP strives to provide collaboration between schools and businesses to increase college and career readiness while expanding downtown Wallingford business alternatives. Mark T. Sheehan High School currently offers several opportunities for its students to be immersed in higher education learning experiences while still enrolled in high school. In addition, students may enroll in 18 advanced placement (AP) offerings and/or six early college experience (ECE) courses offered in cooperation with the University of Connecticut.

Students are recognized for their accomplishments through the monthly spotlight on student award, the honor roll, which is published each marking period, and school-wide academic awards given each spring. In addition, AP Scholars and National Merit Scholar distinction are recognized internally and in the local paper. Following each sport season the athletic department hosts a sports awards night. Each spring there is a school-wide assembly, known as the Celebration of Excellence, where various school groups showcase their performances from throughout the year, including world language classes, scenes from the fall drama and the spring musical. Sheehan has a chapter of the National Honor Society and the Tri-M Music Honor Society, both recognize student academic achievement and school involvement. Student creative work is showcased in *Visions*, Sheehan's literary magazine, winter and spring concerts, the Poetry Slam, One Act Plays, the Variety Show, and art shows at regional adjudicated events and at HUBCAP. The local newspapers sponsor academic and athletic achievement awards. Academic excellence is celebrated with the distinction of Varsity Scholar for graduating seniors who have earned a cumulative GPA of 3.7 or higher.

Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations

Mission Statement: Mark T. Sheehan High School provides a challenging and supportive environment that inspires students to be critical thinkers, effective communicators, and responsible, contributing members of a dynamic global society.

We value Titan **PRIDE** (Personal Responsibility - Respect - Integrity - Dedication - Engagement)

21st Century Expectations for Student Learning

Academic Expectations

- Communicate effectively orally, in writing, and using media tools.
- Solve problems using critical, creative, and innovative thinking.
- Apply content knowledge and skills to new situations.
- Access, analyze, and evaluate information using print, non-print, and digital sources.

Social Expectations

- Work collaboratively while respecting divergent viewpoints.
- Demonstrate respect for oneself and others.
- Act responsibly while demonstrating integrity and ethical behavior.
- Recognize and value the importance of wellness and physical fitness.
- Demonstrate attitudes and habits that are valued in the classroom and workplace.

Civic Expectation

- Understand that each individual plays an important role in maintaining and improving the quality of life for all members of the community.

We believe that . . .

- * Student learning is at the center of every decision considered by the WPS.
- * Student learning is a shared responsibility among the school system, families, and the community.
- * In order to take their place in society, learners need to master both academic and social skills through the instruction and curriculum they receive.
- * Knowing how individuals learn—developmentally, socially, and culturally—drives instruction and curriculum.
- * Learning is nurtured in safe, healthy, environmentally sensitive facilities.
- * Financial accountability and transparency are essential in utilizing the educational resources entrusted to WPS by the community.

Introduction

Introduction

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

The governing body of the Association is its Board of Trustees which supervises the work of 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 Commission on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI), and the Commission on Public Elementary and Middle Schools (CPEMS), and the Commission on International Education (CIE).

As the responsible agency for matters of the evaluation and accreditation of public 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 Mark T. Sheehan High School, in 2013-2014 a committee of nine members and in 2014-2015 a committee of eight 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 three parents, two students, and the school nurse.

The self-study of Mark T. Sheehan High School extended over a period of 20 school months from August 2013 to June 2015. The visiting committee was pleased to note that students and parents joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

Public schools evaluated by the 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, Mark T. Sheehan High School also used questionnaires developed by The Research Center at Endicott College to reflect the concepts contained in the Standards for Accreditation. These materials provided discussion items for a comprehensive assessment of the school by the professional staff during the self-study.

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Committee

A visiting committee of 16 evaluators was assigned by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Mark T. Sheehan 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 various public schools and districts, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Mark T. Sheehan High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 56 hours shadowing 16 students for a half day
- a total of 16 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 16 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 Mark T. Sheehan High School.

Standard 1 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The Mark T. Sheehan community engaged 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. The establishment of core values, beliefs, and learning expectations developed by the Mark T. Sheehan community was a collaborative effort involving all invested stakeholders and several years of extensive work. The core values and beliefs about learning have been addressed in the findings of committees and organizations and have been formally compiled in a well-designed handbook publication and are displayed on school banners, on monitors, and in every classroom and throughout the school on a student-created poster. The school began work on transitioning its mission statement to a narrative focused on its core values and beliefs in March 2011. According to the Endicott survey, 68 percent of parents agree that they are familiar with 21st century learning expectations adopted by Sheehan High School and 77 percent agrees that the school's core values and beliefs represent what the community values about student learning. Various members of the school community, including the Sheehan Parent Teacher Advisory Council (PTAC), the Moran Parent Teacher Advisory Council (parents from the sending school), the Wallingford Project Graduation Committee (community members), the Sheehan faculty, and members of the student body, provided insight into the qualities people want in a Sheehan High School graduate by participating in the activity, "Picture the Graduate" (Wiggins and McTighe). The work continued at the April 2011 faculty meeting where the faculty determined its top ten attributes for a graduate. The Core Values and Beliefs Committee then examined a list of the faculty's core beliefs and fundamental values developed at that meeting. In addition, committee members discussed educational philosophy, the previous mission statement, sample statements from neighboring schools, and the Wallingford Public Schools' district mission statement.

In May 2011, the committee conducted several brainstorming sessions to craft the school's core values and beliefs statement. At the May 2011 faculty meeting, the faculty discussed the top proposed attributes of Sheehan graduates as identified by parents, students, and teachers. The list of forty-two items was pared down using a method similar to the one employed during the April 2011 faculty meeting. They were also asked to compare the list of selected attributes to Sheehan's current mission statement, to determine if any attributes were missing from the list, and to decide if these attributes should be included in the core values and beliefs statement or in the 21st century learning expectations. In June 2011, the faculty worked with members of their departments to develop proposed academic, social, and civic expectations for student learning. Teachers utilized current articles on 21st century skills, information from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE Brochure: *Connecticut Secondary School Redesign, CSDE: Secondary School Reform - The Connecticut Plan*), The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, the P-20 Council, and professional organizations (e.g., ASCD). This work resulted in a list of 49 proposed 21st century learning expectations. Each department's list revealed similar themes (i.e., communication skills, critical thinking, collaboration, global awareness).

In September 2011, the Sheehan Cabinet reviewed and discussed the proposed expectations. The list was pared down to 25 expectations, ensuring fidelity to the original themes that were then grouped into one of the following categories: communication, problem solving, application, health and wellness, work habits, and civic responsibility. Each category contained two or three statements that were readily understood by all constituents, applied to multiple subject areas, and emphasized high expectations. Students, parents, and staff voted on a statement in each category through an online survey. Results were tabulated on October 24, 2011 and accepted by a majority vote. The faculty reviewed the new 21st century learning expectations at the November 2011 department meetings and assigned appropriate expectations to each course within their subject area. The Core Values and Beliefs Committee then agreed upon common language and fundamental ideas and wrote multiple drafts of the core values and beliefs statement. The committee reviewed, revised, and established two statements in December 2011. Students, parents, and staff voted on their choice through an online survey.

Results were tabulated on January 3, 2012 and the faculty accepted it by a majority vote. The core values and beliefs and 21st century student learning expectations were approved by the Board of Education in February 2012.

The school's core values and beliefs continue to evolve. During the 2012-2013 school year, the school community, comprised of faculty, students, and community members, participated in a group read and reflection of *Mindset* by Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D. This led to the creation of district core values in March 2013. A comparison of Sheehan's core values and those of the district demonstrate a strong alignment. In October 2014, the faculty worked collaboratively in small groups to adapt the district belief statements to represent Sheehan's point of view more clearly. The adapted belief statements were compiled in survey format and distributed to the faculty for a vote. The selected statements were then added to the core values document. As a member of the New England Secondary School Consortium (NESSC), Wallingford is focusing on closing persistent achievement gaps and promoting greater educational equity and opportunity for all students by moving toward mastery-based grading. By July 2015, the school hoped to have in place cross-curricular graduation standards. Once these graduation standards are established, the school anticipates the need to revise and update the 21st century learning expectations. The Sheehan High School core values and beliefs are the driving force of the Sheehan High School community. As a result of the time and effort put into the creation of this cohesive document, all stakeholders have a better understanding of the vision and mission of the school.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Indicator 2

Conclusions

Mark T. Sheehan High School has identified challenging and measurable 21st 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. The school-wide rubrics include four academic expectations, five social expectations, and one civic expectation. The school created a school-wide rubric handbook in April 2014 that includes all school-wide rubrics and lists which courses are responsible for reporting out on each rubric. Beginning in February 2012, the faculty employed a dynamic and inclusive process to develop analytic rubrics. Teachers worked in small groups to develop one school-wide analytic rubric from an assigned 21st century learning expectation. Teachers received copies of analytic rubrics that addressed the same themes as those identified in their assigned expectation. These rubrics, not considered exemplars, were the basis of discussion as the groups began to consider important attributes to include in the school-wide rubric. The groups exchanged rubrics for review and critique. The originating group considered the feedback and revised rubrics as needed. Teachers piloted the rubrics in their classes and reported feedback to the faculty. The faculty finalized the rubrics for all academic, civic, and social expectations by March 2013. In a monthly department meeting, the faculty discussed and identified the appropriate expectations for each course. This feedback was compiled and reviewed to ensure that students have sufficient opportunities across multiple subject areas to practice and achieve each learning expectation. The list was distributed in November 2013 along with suggestions for implementation. In April 2014, the approved rubrics were made available in both electronic and print form to all staff members. A survey conducted in October 2014 by the Core Values and Beliefs Standard Committee revealed that both teachers and students utilize the rubrics for feedback. As a result of the 21st century learning expectations that have been developed, students will be challenged to meet these important goals.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Mark T. Sheehan High School's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school, drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in classrooms, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations. The culture of Sheehan High School reflects the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations in a number of ways. The school posts the core values in every classroom and hallway, using a student-designed poster. In addition, the core values are included in the handbook, program of studies, school newsletter, banner and media. Based on the Endicott survey, 79.7 percent of the students state they are familiar with school's learning expectations, but only 58 percent of the staff state that the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are clear to them. The school presents various awards to both students and staff members who best embody the cultural values of the school. Student awards include the Titan Pride Award, academic awards, and Spotlight on Students Award. Teachers recognize each other with the Impact Award and Sheehan Teacher of the Year Award. Mark T. Sheehan High School students are vital participating members of a global society which is evident through clubs, community service, organizations, course studies and school/community activities which are so diverse that most students have opportunities to become involved. Events such as the Celebration of Excellence assembly, blood drive, Student Council's food drive and leaf raking efforts, the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA), Peers Supporting Peers and community service groups such as Interact Club, and Community Revitalization Efforts of Wallingford (CREW) also demonstrate Sheehan's core values and beliefs. The school's powder puff football game is embraced by the school and community and is steeped in tradition.

A number of new Sheehan initiatives in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment reflect core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. The credit recovery program provides freshman and sophomore students who failed their first semester math or English course an opportunity to recover unearned credit. It is an after-school program that offers students the chance to master the skills and knowledge that they previously did not demonstrate in class. The Capstone Experience, piloted in 2014-2015, is a culminating activity that allows students to demonstrate the knowledge and skills they have gained through a personalized project focused on an interest, career plan, community service project or academic pursuit. As part of the experience, students are asked to demonstrate research and communication skills through a formal presentation. Capstone projects could include an investigative composition, a physical product, improving a system, or planning an event or activity. During 2015-2016 the Capstone Experience has expanded to two classes for a total of 30 students. The Bridge Academy is a four-day institute that was piloted in August 2014 for students who are transitioning from the middle school and who have been identified as needing social/emotional focus with additional study skill supports to make a successful entry to high school. The program includes team building, familiarization activities with the high school building and schedule, and a trip to a local college to show students what their post-secondary experience may be like. Clubs and activities that reflect core values include the Human Relations Club, Mock Trial Club, Sheehan Dramatic Arts Society performances, Poetry Slam, Variety Show and the Sikorsky STEM Challenge. In addition, most courses, especially Contemporary Global Issues, Algebra I, Dramatic Arts, Health, and many others, strive to reflect Sheehan's desire to inspire students to be critical thinkers, effective communicators, and responsible, contributing members of a dynamic global society. It is evident during the student interviews that the core values and beliefs are embedded in their daily school culture. Students expressed a sense of pride when speaking of their school community. They alluded to their feeling of comfort, community, support, friendship, helpfulness, accommodations for success.

Sheehan High School's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations have guided school policies, procedures, and decisions. In October 2013, Sheehan collaborated with its sister school, Lyman Hall High School, in an effort to improve school climate. Sheehan joined the state initiative for Positive Behavior Intervention Services (PBIS), a framework for adopting and organizing evidence-based behavioral interventions

to enhance academic and social behavior outcomes for all students. At the first PBIS meeting on November 20, 2013, the team branded the PBIS initiative through the acronym Titan PRIDE (Personal responsibility, Respect, Integrity, Dedication, Engagement) to reflect the district and school's core values. During a faculty meeting one of the assistant principals shared data collected from the PBIS trends of behavior. The staff and administration listed the main concerns and discussed how these concerns would be addressed. In accordance with Sheehan's academic core values, the district also will be implementing mastery-based learning in the future. This effort will move away from a traditional grading system and instead measure students' progress based on identified benchmarks or sustained achievement of locally developed standards. Additionally, the transition to mastery-based learning will include separating behaviors and effort from academic achievement when evaluating student success by employing a "habits of work" rating. In keeping with the civic and social expectations, this rating will address attitudes and ways of behaving that contribute to success in life. It is clear that the school community embraces the civic and social expectations through their Titan Pride (personal responsibility, respect, integrity, dedication and engagement). Because the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st 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, students and staff participate in a shared vision of excellence.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Annually, Mark T. Sheehan High School reviews and revises its core values and beliefs as well as its student expectations for learning to assure that each is still aligned with the school's mission, and addresses the skills and values students need to be successful in today's global society. Beginning in October 2015, the faculty will work collaboratively in small groups each October to review data collected during the previous school year. This data will include individual student and school-wide achievement data in meeting the 21st century learning expectations, discipline information, and community service hours earned by each student. By the end of the meeting, all groups will share their conclusions and give others a chance to voice comments and concerns. Based on the faculty's findings, changes and suggestions from that meeting will be considered and implemented as needed. It is clear that the school community shares these values and beliefs that 21st century learning expectations will ensure the preparation for students in a global society as they continually revisit, revise, and update according to data conclusions.

As part of the revision process, updates and efforts have been accomplished to improve core values and beliefs in the learning environment. The core values and belief statement has been updated to include the acronym PRIDE: personal responsibility, respect, integrity, dedication, engagement. Some teachers have instituted "habits of work" assessments and standards-based grading practices in their classes in anticipation of the district's move to mastery-based learning. Teachers have been recording individual achievements of the school-wide expectations for student learning in PowerSchool. These assessments can be accessed by students and parents through the PowerSchool portal. The evidence clearly demonstrates that Sheehan High School fosters an ongoing commitment of "Seeking to Serve Humanity" while also recognizing the need for constant improvement and growth. As a result of the frequent review and revision of the high school's core values and beliefs, these ideas stay relevant and incorporate changes to ensure their effectiveness.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Commendations

Commendation

The dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process used to develop the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations

Commendation

The inclusion of teachers, staff, students, parents, and community members in the development of the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations

Commendation

The thoughtful development of challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies

Commendation

The inclusion of the social and civic expectations as a part of the school's daily culture

Commendation

The reflection of the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations in the culture of the school, curriculum, and instructional practices and policies, school-wide procedures, and resource allocations

Commendation

The plan to regularly review and revise the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations annually

Standard 2 Indicator 1

Conclusions

There are opportunities within the curriculum for all students to practice and achieve the school's 21st learning expectations. Much of the curriculum at Sheehan is district-wide and is designed in collaboration with the other high school in the district, Lyman Hall, therefore, Sheehan's specific 21st century learning expectations are not included in curriculum documents. However, there are opportunities for students to practice these important skills and responsibility for assessing individual achievement of learning expectations has been specifically assigned to each course. The Program of Studies lists each course and identifies the 21st century learning expectations taught and monitored in that course. The spirit of the 21st century learning expectations is present in many areas of the school. Teachers provide students multiple opportunities to demonstrate the academic expectations for writing. Examples of this include, the Poetry Slam where students write and perform their original work. Students write argumentative and explanatory essays in social studies and English classes. In science, students perform laboratory activities and follow up with formal lab reports, while in mathematics, students use writing to explain their work on performance tasks, and in music, students critique their ensemble performances in writing during each of the concerts. Teachers also allow students to demonstrate their ability to “speak and present effectively.” For instance, in Honors Biology classes, students participate in a science fair where they present their experiments and results, while in mathematics, students present statistical analysis. In English classes, students present their evidence via a mock trial. The social studies curriculum for World History provides an opportunity for students to present their interpretations of culture and social expectations. In Contemporary Global Issues, students participate in debates and present oral reports on their research. Teacher interviews and student work revealed many examples of 21st century learning expectations being embedded in classes even though they are not specifically referenced in curricular documents. Because the curriculum offers opportunities for students to practice and achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations, students will graduate with these important skills.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- central office personnel
- school leadership

Standard 2 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The curriculum at Mark T. Sheehan High School is mainly written in a common format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, informally includes the school's 21st century learning expectations, inconsistently includes instructional strategies, and inconsistently includes assessment practices that include the use of district-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics. Wallingford Public Schools is currently in the process of updating the curriculum so that it reflects the *Understanding by Design (UbD)* 2.0 template. The updates include additional information as well as reformatting the overall appearance of current and developing curriculum to ensure that everything is clearly connected. In 2004, the district used the *UbD* 1.0 template that includes common language such as essential questions, enduring understandings, concepts, content skills, and instructional strategies. The most recent changes include the Connecticut Common Core Standards, shared performance tasks, College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Standards and common rubrics.

Curriculum is developed on a district level for the two high schools. The district also has curricular graduation standards for each course that are very similar to the school-wide expectations for learning. While there is evidence of teachers incorporating learning expectations into classroom teaching, expectations are not consistently included in curriculum documents. The self-study reports that learning expectations are routinely incorporated into classroom activities, which is supported by classroom observations. Because curriculum documents are in different stages of development, some include specific assessments for each unit and specific rubrics for analysis. Some documents include assessments without rubrics, and others include more general assessment strategies.

Department heads and curriculum leaders have indicated that there has recently been a strong emphasis in updating the English, mathematics, and social studies curriculum. These areas were designated a priority because of the implementation of new Common Core State Standards. The curriculum documents in these areas consistently include units of study that include detailed essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, instructional strategies, and assessment practices. The curriculum documents in these areas informally include learning expectations. The curriculum documents from other departments are more inconsistent in the inclusion of these elements mostly because they use a variety of templates. In most curriculum documents there are general descriptions of instructional strategies, suggesting ideas like inquiry, modeling, group discussions and performance tasks.

All curriculum documents are made available to teachers and staff through Google Docs. This allows all stakeholders instant access to any curricular revisions and provides opportunities for wider collaboration in curriculum revision. When the entire curriculum is updated to include units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, learning expectations, instructional strategies, and assessment practices, teachers and staff will be able to more effectively work to monitor and assess student progress toward meeting the learning goals and expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel

- school leadership

Standard 2 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem solving, higher order thinking, incorporates cross-disciplinary learning, frequently provides authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school and inconsistently provides students opportunities for informed and ethical use of technology. Inquiry, problem solving and higher order thinking are a focus for assessments and daily lessons. For example, the fourth unit of the World Literature curriculum requires students in tenth grade English classes to develop rules governing the implementation of technological advancements in society. Geometry teachers ask students to use geometric reasoning to design a bridge. The social studies curriculum requires students in the tenth grade to complete three district-wide performance tasks. The performance tasks are document-based questions, which require students to use higher level thinking skills, as well as content knowledge, to solve a problem. Students in science classes perform inquiry laboratory investigations in which students have to create a hypothesis based on a problem, test the hypothesis, and then analyze the data to determine if their hypothesis was correct. In Spanish 3 classes, teachers expect students to create authentic writing pieces such as letters, journal entries, poems, and short stories to interact with the content and skills. In an English 10 class, students are assigned a mock trial for *Beowulf* which demands that they take a position on an issue related to the text and support their side with textual evidence. Students are also required to judge the strength of the arguments of their classmates and act similarly to that of an authentic jury. There are many examples of course curriculum that require higher order thinking; however, during observations of the taught curriculum, a little more than half the lessons required students to use higher order thinking, inquiry or problem solving skills. Furthermore, the majority of the classes which demonstrated these skills were honors or AP level courses while the academic and general level classes were asked to simply recall information, as seen in visits in some language and math classes, or simply fill in the blank, seen in observations in some history and science classes. Although the curriculum requires higher order thinking, inquiry and problem solving in many courses, daily lessons in general level classes did not always follow this trend.

The written curriculum incorporates cross-disciplinary learning in many areas. Specific courses have been created which foster cross-curricular connections. In the course description for the Humanities course, the promotion of understanding of the connections between the arts and their historical and cultural contexts is emphasized. The curriculum for the 9th grade course Contemporary Global Issues notes cross-curricular connections with economics, science, health, and math. On the other hand, at times these connections are not as explicit. For example, in the English 10 World Literature curriculum document it simply states that students will be able to make connections with history, philosophy, sociology and art, but it does not clearly explain how this will or should happen. Yet, the taught curriculum provides many examples of cross-disciplinary learning occurring as part of daily lessons. A teacher mentioned a history class bringing in an English teacher to help with the grammar aspect of a specific essay that was being written. World language teachers frequently discuss historical events which relate to the culture of the language. A technology education teacher takes time in his drafting classes to review operations with fractions. Also, in a document noting the use of the Mahan Planetarium and Learning Dome, there is evidence of classes such as Sociology, U.S. Government, and World History using the space during class time. In these cases the space was used to expand the students' understanding of the scientific revolution, navigation, astronomy, and mythology.

The curriculum frequently emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school. Sheehan High School gives students many opportunities to apply their knowledge to real-world situations. The majority of parents agreed that their students had the opportunity to apply real world skills both in and out of the classroom. Some parents of students who participated in the pilot of the Capstone project, expressed appreciation of this culminating activity that allows students to demonstrate the knowledge and skills they have gained through a personalized project. Through this piloted

course, students must investigate a topic of their own choosing and create and deliver a presentation to be approved by a panel. This course emphasizes investigative research and communication skills. The CNA program allows students to apply nursing theory to clinical practice. Students engage in simulations, role play, and interactive projects which deepen their understanding of this career path. It was also noted that students further engage in authentic learning opportunities in the classroom through the use of mock trials in English classes and an independent investigative research project in honors Biology. In addition, students are involved in Sikorsky STEM Challenge, which consists of a group of eleven students working through an engineering project sponsored by Sikorsky and Connecticut Innovations. The four-module project involves communication, project planning, research, collaboration, physics, and presentation techniques with a focus on real-life connections throughout each module. After the completion of the four modules, the students have a final project that incorporates the skills and information developed in the previous four modules. A Sikorsky engineer mentors this group and a technology education teacher serves as a facilitator to make sure that the students complete each of their modules and final project on time. There are also many opportunities for students to take part in co-curricular activities that emphasize the application of knowledge and skills such as band and chorus, drama, Debate Club, Mock Trial Club, and the Media Club. These students participate in authentic learning opportunities that reinforce communication and logical thinking as well as performance skills and team work.

The curriculum inconsistently emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through an informed and ethical use of technology. At this point, curriculum documents do not specifically emphasize an informed and ethical use of technology. Curriculum coordinators explained that when subject areas are reviewing their curriculum, they receive more money to purchase supplies as needed, including new technology. Technology is used regularly in classes that have received Chromebook carts allowing students to use the computer to replace their textbook and any other print materials. In classroom observations where technology was used, students were generally using PowerPoint to restate and present information found in their textbook or online. Simply transferring materials from print to a technological device does not guarantee that this transition is helping to deepen understanding. Although the self-study acknowledges that the advisory program periodically addresses the topics of Internet safety, sexual harassment, bullying, and plagiarism, scattered evidence was found that students were using this technology to deepen their understanding and to apply knowledge. Because the curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem solving, higher order thinking, incorporates cross-disciplinary learning, frequently provides authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school, students have the opportunity to engage with the content at a deep level and connect their learning to real-world situations. Consistent opportunities for informed and ethical use of technology will ensure students can appropriately use this important tool.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- parents
- department leaders
- central office personnel

Standard 2 Indicator 4

Conclusions

There is inconsistent alignment between the written and taught curriculum in some areas because many of the curriculum documents are in the process of being revised and updated. The most recent update to the district's strategic plan states that a yearly curriculum review and revision model for all subjects and courses will be rolled out with a staggered implementation beginning this year through 2020. The district's curriculum was previously on a five-year review cycle, but many documents have not been updated in almost twice that amount of time. Courses in English, science, world languages, and physical education are just a few of the areas where curriculum documents have not been updated since between 2005-2009. For example, both the English 12 and Biology curricula were created in 2005 with only Biology being reviewed and updated in 2008. Teachers of these courses noted that they, individually, have been updating the course material to begin incorporating Common Core Standards until the documents can be updated. The English 12 curriculum was re-written this school year and the new semester-length courses will be implemented in the 2016 - 2017 school year.

Although the documents of many courses have not been recently updated, in most disciplines, the written curriculum does still align with the taught curriculum. Through observations of the world languages department in courses like Italian and German, students were seen engaging in conversation, modeling, practicing vocabulary, with an emphasis on student participation, all of which are stated as instructional strategies or assessment methods in their curriculum. In the Digital Photography class, students were seen applying the techniques of the craft in various stages of a project, all of which apply to the instructional strategies listed in the curriculum.

Throughout the district, there are measures in place to ensure that all teachers of a specific course are actually teaching the agreed upon curriculum. Teachers and curriculum coordinators rely on common assessment data to confirm that teachers are keeping up with the pacing of the course. Data for these assessments must be reported by predetermined dates, therefore it is assumed that teachers will cover certain skills in the curriculum by that point. Teachers are provided with common planning time to discuss curriculum with their colleagues. During common planning time and/or department prep time, teachers can discuss the results from each common assessment and develop collective interventions and strategies to improve scores moving forward. Curriculum coordinators may also monitor the implementation of the curriculum by observing teachers during the evaluation process. When the remainder of the written curriculum documents are updated, the school will be able to ensure that the written curriculum matches the taught curriculum, and students will benefit from a guaranteed and viable curriculum.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership

Standard 2 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exists irregularly between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district. Common prep periods have been used within departments and generally these common planning times are shared between and among staff members who teach the same course and/or grade level. The administration cannot mandate that the common planning time be used for collaboration because that would be a violation of the teacher's contract, but teachers reported that they do utilize this time for that purpose, even if briefly or in an informal way.

Meetings specifically dedicated to vertical alignment between the sending schools do not regularly occur, although alignment is sometimes discussed at curriculum management team meetings. Personnel involved in these meetings may include principals, subject area teachers, curriculum coordinators, department chairpersons, and reading interventionists. The minutes of these meetings display discussion of curriculum but do not show a strong effort to align the curriculum between the middle and high school. The submitted minutes display an effort to discuss curriculum in reference to re-leveling courses and discussing progress on curricular revisions. Teachers believe it would be beneficial for these meetings to occasionally focus on the skills that are taught in the middle school and the expectations of the high school in order to better prepare teachers at both schools to serve their students. Teachers noted that the only information they receive about incoming 9th graders related to curriculum are students' standardized test scores from 8th grade, and it is their choice to seek out and utilize that information. Curriculum documents reveal vague suggestions for coordination between academic areas, such as encouraging teachers to share historical backgrounds of texts before reading, but there is no evidence of time given for teachers to meet to discuss these learning opportunities. However, curricular coordination does exist informally between and among departments with teachers seeking out their own resources from colleagues to make connections with other disciplines. In many discussions, teachers, especially those who teach English, social studies and humanities, expressed many instances where they opted to either plan collaboratively with a cross-curricular teacher or to share resources. Teachers agreed that this type of collaboration is a work in progress. When the school and district effectively implement curricular coordination and vertical articulation between and among departments, teachers will be more knowledgeable on the prior experiences of their students and will be more prepared to meet their individual needs.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel

Standard 2 Indicator 6

Conclusions

Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library media center at Mark T. Sheehan High School are sufficient to implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities. The self-study reports that for the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years, the student-to-teacher ratio was 13:1. The current student-to-teacher ratio is 12:1. The self-study and teacher interviews revealed that recent cuts in faculty have impacted class size in core classes in a detrimental way. In addition, the world languages and CTE departments are relying on the assistant principals to serve as department liaisons, coordinating department meetings, preparing and managing the department budgets and creating the schedule for the teachers. The health and art departments have department chairpersons who also have full teaching loads while other department heads have a reduced load.

The Endicott survey showed a discrepancy between the students' and staff's view on the sufficiency of instructional materials. Seventy-seven percent of the students surveyed indicate that Sheehan has enough materials for each of their courses while only 45 percent of staff perceives the materials to be adequate. In a curriculum implementation survey, two out of six departments indicate that equipment, supplies, and facilities are not adequate to implement their curriculum. In interviews with department heads, however, it was felt that most departments have what they need to implement the curriculum with fidelity. Requests for budgetary items are submitted each year, and money is allocated to cover as many requests as possible.

The availability of technology at Sheehan has increased over the last few years. All Sheehan High School classrooms, except the woodshop, are equipped with projection capabilities. In all classrooms that are not equipped with SMART Boards, LightRaise Interactive Projectors, or LCD TVs, a LCD projector is mounted on the ceiling. The district has also made a transition to Google Applications for Education, providing resources for enhanced communication for faculty and students. Through a district initiative in the 2013-2014 school year, all freshman social studies teachers received class sets of Chromebooks. The English department and mathematics department also received Chromebook carts, and the library media center has 60 Chromebooks to loan out to students. During the 2014-2015 school year, the special education department also received a class set. While school board members and the superintendent indicated that they believe that the current availability of technology is adequate, teachers do not agree. For instance, despite the recent Chromebook purchases, there are not enough Chromebooks for teachers to have consistent access for their classes and some departments, such as science, have no Chromebooks dedicated to their department. As a result, teachers are reluctant, or unable, to design lessons that require students to use Chromebooks to develop or demonstrate the learning strategies related to technology. Without reliable access to class sets of computers, and professional development on proper ways to use computers to provide 21st learning opportunities, it is unreasonable to expect teachers to invest significant time to redesign lessons to provide students with rich opportunities in these areas.

Generally, staff feels that there is adequate funding for equipment, materials, and supplies, while also expressing some areas of concern. For example, over the last 10 years, the football boosters have donated items to the weight room such as mirrors, stereo system, bar bells, kettle bells, adjustable benches, squat racks. These donations have reduced the amount of funding needed by the school district in this area. Other funding concerns were voiced in regards to the science, health, and music programs. The Sheehan club list shows 27 co-curricular organizations actively meeting in the current school year. While these clubs are not fully funded through the school, their existence is evidence of a wide variety of learning opportunities made available to the students. The media center has adequate resources to support the curriculum. Students have access to 60 Chromebooks, 42 desktop computers, audio visual equipment, and print and digital materials. Also, thanks to the hard work and dedication of the Wallingford Education Foundation (WEF) and donations from other generous donors and

community organizations, a new Spitz SciDome digital projector was installed in the Sheehan Planetarium in September 2014. The planetarium is fully functional and used by a variety of groups outside and inside the school. While staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities are generally adequate to implement the curriculum, an increase in access to technology would provide increased opportunities for teachers to leverage this important resource in their classes.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- school board
- department leaders
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 7

Conclusions

The district provides the school's professional staff with insufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research. Since 2011, the district has spent \$34,326 on curriculum development, revision, and evaluation, the vast majority of which was devoted to English and math because of the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The district used to be on a five-year curriculum review cycle but that has been somewhat derailed due to a heavy focus on the Common Core and the emphasis on English and math. Subject areas such as science and art have very recently adopted new standards, therefore the curriculum is expected to be updated in the next cycle. It is evident that the school is going through a time of transition in terms of updating the curriculum due to changing standards and a new focus on mastery-based learning.

When curriculum is created and reviewed, teachers are invited and encouraged to take part in the process which occurs mostly in the summer and during release time. Based on results of the Endicott survey, 63 percent of teachers say they are involved in the curriculum revision process, but only 29 percent believes that the district gives teachers enough time to work on the curriculum. Both formative and summative assessment data is used to inform curricular changes. During this process teachers are also encouraged to consult and incorporate research such as information from educational journals or books such as *Classroom Instruction that Works: Research Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement* (Marzano, 2001). Once the curriculum has been developed or reviewed, it must be submitted for approval by the superintendent or the assistant superintendent. It is then reviewed and approved by the Wallingford School Board's Instructional Committee. Several teachers expressed concern that the approval of curriculum by the board can take some time depending on how much curriculum they have to review. The principal confirmed that the board does their best to approve the curriculum in a timely manner, but it depends on what other agenda items are up for review. Previously, curriculum for a year long course had to be reviewed and adopted as a whole. Now the board is willing to look at one unit at a time to ensure that teachers can implement it in a timely manner. When the school's professional staff is provided sufficient personnel, time, and resources for ongoing curriculum development, teachers will take more ownership of the curriculum and more effectively implement it. Increased teacher autonomy will ensure a more timely and universally supported curriculum.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student work
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey

Standard 2 Commendations

Commendation

The opportunity for students to practice the 21st century learning expectations in many courses

Commendation

The use of a common curriculum format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills

Commendation

The emphasis placed on authentic learning opportunities which provides students with a depth of understanding and allows them to apply their knowledge in a real-world setting

Commendation

The use of inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking in many honors and Advanced Placement courses

Commendation

The informal collaboration between and among teachers of various subject areas to coordinate cross-disciplinary experiences which ensures that students gain a deep understanding in and across subject area curriculum

Commendation

The recent investment in new technology, including additional Chromebooks, which provides students with more diverse learning opportunities

Commendation

The funding for staffing, instructional materials, supplies, facilities, and co-curricular activities which are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum

Commendation

The emphasis placed on the creation and review of the core area curriculum that ensures students are prepared to meet graduation requirements

Standard 2 Recommendations

Recommendation

Ensure all curriculum documents are up to date and are aligned with the taught curriculum

Recommendation

Ensure that general level courses use inquiry, problem solving and higher order thinking in the written and taught curriculum

Recommendation

Continue to provide additional funding for technology according to the annual district technology budget to ensure that students have opportunities to practice informed and ethical use of technology

Recommendation

Develop and implement regular meetings between sending schools in order to clearly articulate the curriculum transition between these levels to meet students' needs

Recommendation

Provide sufficient time and financial resources for the ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum using assessment results and current research

Standard 3 Indicator 1

Conclusions

Teachers' instructional practices are examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. The self-study indicates that each course taught at Mark T. Sheehan High School is assigned academic, social, and civic expectations, which promote 21st century skills. Teachers and students indicated that these expectations are listed in the program of studies and on the course syllabi, but that they are rarely the focus of discussion. In interviews, teachers, students and parents could not clearly articulate the academic expectations, but believed the expectations are at the core of instruction, and most often cite the civic expectation as a core part of learning at the high school. Multiple sources cite the Capstone pilot as a strong demonstration of the inclusion of academic expectations and core values as part of instruction. While teaching practices sometimes implicitly connect to the 21st century learning expectations, they do not consistently or overtly support the core beliefs and values about learning. However, the teacher evaluation system utilized in the district requires teachers to submit formal reflections after each observation and review of practice and these reflections often include the use of 21st century learning skills. Teacher leaders explained that while not formally referenced, at some level, students "know they are learning to write and read and express themselves" without making explicit reference to the expectations or the rubrics. During interviews, many teachers indicated that they reflect on their instructional practices informally and independently, especially when working on curriculum revision. When teachers continuously examine instructional practices for alignment with school core values, beliefs and learning expectations, they can better provide rich and consistently meaningful instruction that integrates these important goals.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders

Standard 3 Indicator 2

Conclusions

Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by making efforts to personalize instruction; occasionally engaging in cross-disciplinary learning; frequently engaging students as active and self-directed learners; emphasizing inquiry, problem solving and higher order thinking skills in some classes; consistently applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks; intermittently engaging students in self-assessment and reflection, and integrating technology in many areas.

Building administration reported an increased emphasis on personalizing instruction by appealing to different learning styles and encouraging student choice. A review of student work included some examples of personalized learning. In one example, students were asked to select one of three ways to demonstrate understanding the skeletal system. They had the option of making a model, demonstrating an exercise, or making a drawing to demonstrate how a particular skeletal muscle worked. Another example included a Spanish assignment that allowed students to choose between writing a report, writing a dialogue between two fictional characters, and writing a diary entry. Classroom observations occasionally revealed learning tasks that were personalized and offered choices. For example, during an introductory lesson on Revolutions in a World Literature class, students identified the questions that they wanted answered in the unit and brainstormed relevant learning activities. While this practice was evident in a few classroom observations, it was not widespread.

While most classroom observations did not include cross-disciplinary learning, there were a few interdisciplinary learning activities. For example, a biology class required students to incorporate various mathematical concepts. A world literature class referenced students' prior learning in social studies coursework. Additionally, the self-study highlighted the manner in which the art and English department teachers work together to create a literary magazine to feature student art, poetry, and creative writing samples. Teacher interviews highlighted courses such as Humanities and Contemporary Global Issues which support interdisciplinary learning by drawing on multiple content areas. Additionally, evidence from the self-study revealed that the planetarium was used by multiple disciplines for cross-disciplinary learning.

Students were observed conducting inquiry in some classes. In one U.S. History class, students used Chromebooks to research and evaluate the presidency of Andrew Jackson using resources on the Internet. Teacher interviews and reviews of student work revealed that some teachers are selecting learning tasks that encouraged students to engage in inquiry. In a teacher interview, the teacher described a lesson where students participated in a mock trial on *Beowulf*. Similarly, student work submitted as part of the self-study reflected the use of inquiry in several disciplines. A curricular document for Algebra specified several inquiry activities. Classroom observations confirmed that active learning is a common practice at Mark T. Sheehan High School. Students were witnessed collaborating to create a public service announcement on drug addiction in Health. Students in an AP Physics class were actively involved in designing a lab experiment. Students in world language classes were actively engaged in role play and collaborative speaking exercises. While most classroom observations revealed students engaged in active learning, a number of lessons were largely passive. In one math class, students worked independently on solving and simplifying equations, and there was an absence of student discourse. In a social studies class, students passively took notes and watched a video clip. Students copied information off the board in a technology class, and another teacher lectured for almost the entire block in a computer course. Group work was present in some, but not all classes. In several observations, students were witnessed answering questions quietly on their own and reporting out individually.

In some areas, teachers' instructional practices supported the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by emphasizing inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking. According to the Endicott

survey, 91 percent of staff and 81 percent of parents indicate teachers engage in rigorous learning activities. Parent and student interviews revealed that the level of challenge varied depending on the teacher and course level. Observations of a variety of science classes showed differences in the approach to student participation in laboratory experiments. Some teachers designed laboratory experiments where the procedures were highly prescriptive and allowed students minimal opportunity to engage in problem solving. Other science courses encouraged higher order thinking by requiring that students form the questions and design the experiment. This discrepancy was also evident in math classes. While some teachers asked students to work individually and silently to practice simplifying and solving equations, another math teacher required students to work in groups to tackle a challenging problem. Classroom observations revealed a consistent lack of rigor in the basic and general level classes. For example, in one class, less than half of the students were on task and the teacher did not attempt any interventions to re-engage students. In another general level class, learning activities required only basic recall. In a review of student work from a general education science class, students were asked to create a timeline to simply list dates and event titles showing the history of atomic development. Students were not asked to conduct higher order thinking such as evaluating cause and effect or applying or synthesizing their knowledge.

As demonstrated through observations, student work, and interviews, a large amount of evidence suggests that teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks. Students in a social studies course were required to research an environmental cause, participate in a fundraiser, and spread awareness within the school. Students in a health class were asked to create a "public service announcement" related to addiction. Students in science classes were largely participating in collaborative laboratory experiments. A Capstone course is offered that requires students to apply learning in meaningful, real-world tasks. Similarly, English students were invited to participate in a Poetry Slam. A review of assignments submitted as part of the self-study included a stock market game used in the business department and a political candidate forum activity utilized by the social studies department. In Medical Careers, students explore topics including medical ethics, terminology, measurement of vital signs, and infection control. Students also demonstrate their learning during patient care simulations by analyzing a variety of ethical dilemmas and by working with models of human body systems. The Certified Nursing Assistant program prepares high school students for employment in hospitals and long-term care settings. While several teachers found clever ways to require students to apply knowledge and skills to authentic learning tasks, some less authentic tasks included research that focused on restating information, copying notes off of the board, solving equations without any real-world connection, and teacher lecturing.

Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by intermittently engaging students in self-assessment and reflection. Teachers used district, course-specific, or assignment-specific rubrics that reflected the essence of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Student interviews revealed frequent use of rubrics for both peer and self-assessment. Students reported positively that these rubrics are helpful in clarifying expectations and specifying different levels of performance. Students reported frequently engaging in and benefiting from peer editing in their English classes. They also reported engaging in Socratic seminar discussions where students sat in an inner and outer circle. Students on the inner circle debated a topic, while the outer circle evaluated their performance, formed additional questions, and provided feedback. In interviews, teachers presented student work that included rubrics requiring students to engage in self assessment on school-wide rubrics. One physical education teacher presented a lesson showing how he required students to evaluate their peers in a group assignment against a teacher-generated rubric aligned with the school's communication rubric. Evidence submitted along with the self-study included a formal lab report grading rubric requiring both peer and self-assessment and a social communication exit slip used by the special education department.

Many teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by integrating technology. All Sheehan High School classrooms, except the woodshop, are equipped with projection capabilities. In all classrooms that are not equipped with SMART Boards, LightRaise Interactive Projectors, or LCD TVs, a LCD projector is mounted on the ceiling. Approximately twenty percent of teachers are using Google Classroom in order to deliver assignments, grade assignments, give feedback to students, and

monitor work in progress. The educational technology resource teacher offers a professional development course to become a certified Google Educator. The purpose of this course is to teach faculty members the benefits of Google Apps, such as Google Classroom, in order to facilitate student competency in computer literacy. Many teachers also utilize Twitter or classroom websites to remind and communicate with students regarding class assignments. Some teachers in the building use a third party texting application known as *Remind* to communicate with students and parents. This is a safe way for teachers to send text messages about homework, assignments, or class announcements. In addition, students are able to collaborate with their classmates via school email and by sharing Google documents and resources. According to the Endicott survey, 74 percent of students state that teachers ask them to use technology in their assignments. Teachers and students alike present information through a variety of formats, including, PowerPoint, Prezi, Animoto, and MovieMaker. Other technology utilized in the classroom to enhance instruction includes, graphing calculators, clickers/online polling, document cameras, and video clips accessed through YouTube. Some members of the social studies department use interactive computer simulations and online interactive games to involve students in their own learning. The *Decisions, Decisions* interactive simulations, created by Tom Snyder productions, engage students in problem solving and debate. The iCivics.org interactive games and simulations provide students with an opportunity to learn important concepts and ideas and have fun at the same time. The English department uses www.turnitin.com for students to submit papers. The site checks the web for plagiarism and allows teachers to comment directly on papers and provide feedback for students. The music department uses Charms Music Office for students to submit recordings of themselves for assessment as well as the Sight Reading Factory for students to practice. And the math department uses Geometer's Sketchpad, GeoGebra, graphing calculators, and a program called Ten Marks which provides online resources to guide effective instruction for each of the Common Core Math Standards.

During classroom observations, students were observed using Chromebooks and library computers to research topics in computer technology, health, social studies and English classes. Some teachers were observed using Google Classroom to give students access to information about upcoming assignments. Interviews with teachers and department heads revealed a desire for additional Chromebooks for student use. Both teachers and department leaders reported that improved access to Chromebooks would improve their ability to embed additional inquiry and project-based learning into their instruction. The math department reported that more consistent access to online instruction such as GeoGebra would help advance student achievement. According to the self-study, there are currently approximately 347 Chromebooks available for 854 students. Integration of technology is a consistent practice among many teachers at Sheehan High School. Increased access to additional devices over the next several years in accordance with the district strategic plan for technology will provide even more students daily access to this important resource.

When teachers consistently engage students in instruction that is personalized, student-centered, rigorous, interdisciplinary, and centered around authentic learning tasks, students mastery of the content and involvement in their learning will increase.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview

- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by using formative assessment, especially during instructional time; inconsistently differentiating strategically; often organizing group learning activities purposefully; and sometimes providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom and often offering support to students outside the classroom. While formative assessment is used very effectively by some teachers during instructional time, it is not consistently evident. One effective example includes an AP Physics class where students were asked to make a free-body diagram of a system, as modeled on the handout provided by the instructor. Students applied a concept previously learned, and the labeling of forces showed whether students recalled and could apply to correct forces that would act on such a model. This was sketched on their papers, and the instructor circulated, checking to see that students “got the concept” before moving forward. When students returned to whole-group instruction, the teacher noted that all students had the required tension and gravity forces, and then explained how these would impact their work moving forward. Another strong example of such progress monitoring was observed in a Spanish classroom, when students were asked to sketch a room based on the description the teacher read in Spanish. After the reading, the teacher read the description in English, and students were immediately able to see what was correct about their drawings and what was missing. This formative assessment allowed both teacher and students to see where improvement is needed in terms of studying the vocabulary of that unit. In all such cases, students were either explicitly told or they implicitly understood that the purpose of the assessment was to monitor their progress and to help them improve. However, this practice was not universal. While some observed teachers used methods such as “do now” prompts, exit cards, and general monitoring of progress on assignments to formatively assess and adjust instruction, an equal number of observations showed no examples of progress monitoring or adjustment of instruction to meet student needs based on what progress was demonstrated during class time. Student interviews confirmed this inconsistency, with one student saying the use of check-ins for understanding “depends on the level of class you are taking,” with variances between levels and instructors.

Teacher interviews indicate that differentiation most often occurs through increased scaffolding, adjusting the pace of classes, providing visuals and concrete examples, and providing opportunities for discussion. Often, this differentiation is not part of the initial planning process but rather in response to perceived student need. Teachers indicated that differentiation is formally planned between course levels and that adjustments to instructional approaches are made for individuals in response to observations of their performance on class work. According to the Endicott survey, 82.1 percent of teachers state that they use differentiated instructional practices to meet the learning needs of all students. The self-study indicates that some teachers differentiate by using whole class and small group activities, and that instruction for lower level students is chunked. Some evidence suggests that teachers modify assignments in different classes for special education students. Other evidence suggests that differentiation is not strategically planned or implemented within course levels in response to individual student needs. During student shadowing, it was observed that much of the planned differentiation does not engage students equally in higher order thinking skills. For example, while Honors Biology students were encouraged to reflect on their past performance and apply their learning to a new task, the General Biology classes took fill-in-the-blank notes from a Powerpoint and then sorted terms into category columns. Administration cited the use of the co-teaching model to differentiate as an area for growth. The self-study identifies modifications and services for ELL students as an additional area of growth. ELL students attend regular education courses, but do receive support through an ELL Education course. In this course, students identified as English Language Learners (ELLs) are tested and placed in English Language Learning (ELL) courses which assist students in acquiring skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing, as well as skills needed to be successful in their mainstream academic courses.

Some evidence suggests that teachers plan group activities to engage students in in-depth learning or to assist

students in collaborating. According to the Endicott survey, 85.8 percent of students state that their teachers use group activities, and 77.2 percent of staff state that they organize group learning. Student work and the self-study demonstrate some examples, such as mathematics teachers using defined-role cooperative learning groups, and show that some staff purposefully organize group learning activities to fit the needs of each student. Other observations showed that teachers provide great latitude in student choice of groups as a way to promote comfort in discussion or productivity when continuing work outside of class. In teacher interviews, collaboration was another frequently cited goal for group learning. Much of the observational evidence indicated that group activities are used to promote higher order thinking; for example, in world language classes, students often speak to each other in groups to practice applying their vocabulary and language concepts to authentic communications. There was evidence of some use of strategic pairing, with the example of the Peers Supporting Peers Internship to support special education students frequently cited in the self-study, observations, and teacher interviews. Other examples of strategic pairing are mentioned anecdotally in teacher interviews. In the self-study and in teacher interviews, it was reported that a frequent purpose for grouping is pairing students who perform well with those who struggle.

Additional supports and alternative strategies within the regular classroom were inconsistently evident. The self-study, panel presentation, and department leaders all confirmed that the Teacher Student Assistance Team actively identifies students who are struggling and plans supports for them in and out of the classroom. In observations, formal supports within the classroom were not evident, and formative assessment techniques were inconsistently used to monitor student attainment of learning objectives and to adjust instructional strategies. Teachers frequently relied on student self-advocacy when determining who to provide with extra help. Through teacher and student interviews, it was evident that students are expected to be responsible for seeking help in and outside of class. Students and teachers reported that students are expected to recognize when they are having trouble and ask for assistance; one student explained that in terms of poor performance, "If you don't speak up, it's your own fault," and another student commented that teachers always say, "We can't read your minds. We can't see if you need help." Students indicated that teachers are available to help but expect students to self-advocate. Multiple sources indicated that teachers provide extra-help sessions after school for students who need additional time and support. The self-study indicates that all teachers are required to have two extra help days after school where they can provide extra help to any student who wants to attend. Additionally, after-school tutoring is offered in mathematics twice a week, English once a week, and social studies once a week. Teachers and students also reported this is a common practice, with the students understanding the expectation that if one is having trouble, he or she should email the teacher or come after school. When teachers consistently adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of students as determined by formative assessment, increased achievement will result. Differentiating and providing additional supports or alternative strategies within classes allows teachers to meet the individual needs of all learners while holding them to the same standards of mastery.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Formally and informally, teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments; informally examining student work; inconsistently using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents; frequently examining current research; and engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice. Observations showed some teachers adjusting their individual instruction based on formative assessment administered during lessons. In the Endicott survey results, 86.1 percent of teachers report that they improve their instructional practice by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments. Teachers reported reflecting on student work in their courses, but are provided limited time to collaborate with other teachers in this area. Administration reported purposefully structuring the schedule to ensure that teachers with common courses had similar preparation time. While informal, this provides teachers the opportunity to plan collaboratively. Some teachers reported that, contractually, administrators cannot require teachers to use this time to review assessment data. Both administrators and teachers reported inconsistent use of this time for collaboration regarding instruction. There is a plan for the 2016 - 2017 school year for all teachers to exchange the responsibility of a 42 minute duty period for a Professional Learning Group meeting with their colleagues.

Teacher and departmental leaders agreed that while some departments meet to discuss student work, this practice is not consistent school-wide. Furthermore, few opportunities are provided to meet across content areas. Several teachers and department leaders lamented the loss of time specifically allocated for data teams to review assessment results collaboratively. While the self-study indicates that data team meetings are used to compose and compare assessments, teachers reported that data teams are no longer meeting. In some cases, classroom observations demonstrated teachers are using formative assessment to adjust instruction. One science teacher was observed making an adjustment to a lesson as a result of a "do now" activity that students were struggling with. Noticing that the students were having difficulty applying previous learning, she modeled an example and then allowed students to practice independently. Students reported frequently being asked to complete exit slips in their classes, but there was inconsistent observation and reporting of these assessments being used to inform instruction.

Evidence from the self-study demonstrates that the school solicits information from parents about student learning needs through questionnaires distributed during Open House asking parents to respond to prompts such as, "My son/daughter learns best when..." A math department survey taken via Google forms requested feedback from teachers, students and central office staff on the school's Algebra I general program. A separate survey evaluated the effectiveness of the Agile Mind's Intensified Algebra program. Some teachers reported using student feedback to improve practices in their individual courses. Teachers report the common use of learning style surveys to meet the various needs of their students. While administrators detailed the use of walk-through data as a means to improve instruction, teachers reported that they do not receive specific or actionable feedback from these observations. Administrators clarified that the data from iWalkthroughs is used to uncover patterns of teaching practice, determine student engagement, and measure instructional rigor throughout the school. The iWalkthrough data is reported by department as well as school wide, but is not used for individual feedback to teachers. During two professional development sessions in the 2015 - 2016 school year, teachers reviewed the collected data from iWalkthroughs. Building administration highlighted the use of the teacher evaluation process as a means of providing feedback to teachers and requiring the faculty to reflect on student work and examine assessment data to improve instruction.

Teachers frequently improve their instructional practices by examining current research. The district held a book discussion surrounding Carol Dweck's book, *Mindset*. Parents, teachers, and students were invited to participate

in a book discussion and a SKYPE conference with the author. Students were asked to reflect on Dweck's research in English courses. Building administrators stated it was common practice to share current research with the staff. The assistant principal reported collecting data on student discipline and sharing best practices with the staff. The central office staff commended the principal for her role as an instructional leader and highlighted the way she used faculty meetings to build capacity. The principal indicated that during faculty meetings, she and the other building administrators frequently shared articles and organized collaborative activities surrounding best practices. Similarly, many teachers reported that administration is supportive of teacher-directed, individualized professional development and many teachers independently attended conferences related to content-specific instructional practices.

Teachers formally and informally improve their instructional practices by engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice. Department meeting minutes highlight structured discussions of mastery-based learning and grading practices. While central office and building administrators reported providing structured opportunities for teacher engagement in professional discourse on instruction such as self-directed PD and district-wide book clubs, almost all teachers reported frustration with the lack of time allocated specifically for professional discourse focused on instructional practice. Teachers consistently agreed that most district-initiated professional development was not directly relevant to their instructional needs. Most teachers reported a lack of continuity with the professional development and a feeling that there are too many initiatives occurring simultaneously. Many teachers agreed that staff-directed professional development and departmental time is the most useful and relevant professional development. Teachers also reported a desire for more structured time to review assessment data within their departments which will be provided next year once scheduled time is allocated for Professional Learning Groups. When teachers are provided regularly scheduled time to review assessment data and discuss best instructional practices in a collaborative setting, then the administration can more effectively build instructional capacity and improve instructional practice.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices. Teachers regularly read content-specific literature designed to help them improve instruction in their subject area. According to the survey conducted by the Instruction Standard Committee, 60 percent of teachers invested time reading and integrating information acquired from literature into their discipline. The self-study indicates that beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, each department subscribes to a professional journal related to their discipline. For example, the social studies department purchased a membership in the National Council for Social Studies and the physical education department is a new member to SHAPE America (Society of Health and Physical Educators). Teachers reported that administrators, department leaders, and colleagues often informally share literature specific to their content areas, usually via email; however, they also reported an absence of structured time to access and discuss literature specific to their content area.

Teachers reported informally reflecting on their conversations with colleagues. As reported in a survey conducted by the Instruction Standard Committee, 86 percent of staff reported that they have collaborated with colleagues. The administration structures the schedule in a way to allow for optional common planning time within preparation periods for teachers in the same subject area. Teachers reported informal discussions with colleagues about instruction. Forty-eight percent of teachers report belonging to an organization or association related to the discipline.

Teachers formally and informally reflect on feedback. A system of iWalkthroughs provides general feedback to the whole school. Teachers' evaluation plans include the opportunity for peer review by completing a collegial visit to satisfy the Review of Practice component. Teachers informally gather and reflect on student and parent feedback. Administration reported providing consistent opportunities for reflection within the teacher evaluation process in both the conferencing following teacher observations and the review of student achievement data.

In the Instruction Standard Committee survey, 74 percent of teachers report that they have attended some type of professional development specific to their content area. Teachers reported attending conferences, AP workshops, CCSS workshops and curriculum writing sessions. Teacher interviews confirmed that teachers feel very supported by administration in their individual professional development endeavors. In addition, over the span of three years, 73 percent of teachers attended workshops related to their discipline outside of the district's offerings. Moreover, interviews revealed that staff would like more time to have focused conversations about instruction within their content area, as much of this is only done informally during preparation periods and after school. Topics for district-directed professional development time have included: mastery-based learning, graduation and content standards, iWalkthrough data review, personalized learning, and mandated training on suicide prevention. Of the eight early release PD days during the year, three were self directed, and one was developed by the building-based PD committee. From the self-study and teacher interviews, it is clear that teachers view themselves as dedicated professionals and indicated a desire for more freedom to guide their own professional growth in departmental and professional learning time. Because teachers are provided with formal time for self-guided and collaborative reflection on content-specific instructional practices, in addition to professional learning in their content area, teachers are better able to promote student engagement by identifying meaningful and challenging learning tasks for all students.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Commendations

Commendation

The teachers' instructional practices that support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations in most courses

Commendation

The effort to promote increased personalization through the use of the Capstone program and student choice in individual courses

Commendation

The creation of interdisciplinary courses such as Humanities and Contemporary Global Issues that support cross-disciplinary learning

Commendation

The efforts to provide common preparation time for teachers who teach the same courses and the plan to begin Professional Learning Groups in the 2016 - 2017 school year

Commendation

The presence of active and self-directed learning in a majority of courses

Commendation

The teachers who maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices

Commendation

The efforts by building administrators to engage the faculty in discussion regarding current research and best practices

Standard 3 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop instructional practices to promote higher order thinking skills through the use of inquiry, problem solving, and authentic learning tasks in all course levels

Recommendation

Implement the planned Professional Learning Groups for the 2016 -2017 school year so that teachers have structured time to review and discuss student work and assessment data as a means of improving instruction

Recommendation

Identify additional ways to gather feedback from parents and students to improve instruction

Recommendation

Plan and monitor the implementation of modifications and supports for ELL students and others with specific learning needs in the regular classroom

Recommendation

Continue to provide relevant professional development related to technology integration for teachers so that technology can be seamlessly integrated into instruction

Standard 4 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The process of assessing individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations is a work in progress. The use of rubrics is a common practice at Sheehan High School and the professional staff consistently employ the use of rubrics to assess student learning; however, the range and variance of rubrics to assess 21st century learning expectations is confused between district-wide, school-wide, and teacher-created rubrics. After school-wide rubrics were introduced in the school and the teachers were beginning to use them, the Wallingford School District also put forth a set of district-wide rubrics which measured many of the same skills. In addition, the district is moving towards mastery-based learning which requires scoring criteria for all courses that will be common throughout the district and will lead to standards for graduation. Teachers admitted that the process of reporting out student 21st century learning expectations is not clear although work is being done to move toward a more streamlined and focused system. Teachers and students gave evidence that rubric use to assess student learning expectations in the content areas has helped to clarify assignments and has given students a roadmap of what is expected of them. Teachers also showed evidence of including components of school learning expectations consistently within assignments but not necessarily using the school-wide rubrics in their entirety. Rubrics are commonly shared with students before assignments but often look different from class to class and assignment to assignment.

In 2014 a rubric handbook was created and distributed to teachers with 21st century learning expectations and rubrics. Beginning in 2015, teachers began reporting student outcomes of 21st century learning outcomes in PowerSchool. Communication to parents and students explain that the additional information provides a more complete evaluation for students and also conveys improvement over time. During interviews with teachers, it became clear that there is not one common agreed upon method to evaluate student progress towards achieving the school-wide learning expectations. Some teachers are using rubrics, or sections of rubrics, to determine these scores and others are making a cumulative judgement based on the student's performance over the course of the semester or year. Teachers in various departments have also adopted one of the components of applicable rubrics as part of their yearly Student Learning Objectives. For example, in math, teachers may select problem solving to use as a goal, and use one part of a department performance task rubric to evaluate student growth. Further evidence showed teachers in other areas applying pieces of rubrics for argument writing and communication as part of their goals. It is clear that teachers are aware of the school-wide expectations and the importance of measuring them, however, the means to measure student performance on the expectations varies among teachers. With the district's move to mastery-based learning, it is likely that the school-wide expectations will be integrated into the scoring criteria for each course. When the process to measure 21st century learning expectations becomes uniform across disciplines, students will have a better idea of whether they are consistently meeting these important goals.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers

- students
- department leaders
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school's professional staff communicates individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families and has a plan to communicate the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community. The Sheehan High School professional staff is expected to communicate individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families at the end of each marking period. During the 2014-2015 school year, a method for reporting student achievement of the 21st century learning expectations was implemented. This method requires all teachers to rate their students on specific 21st century expectations as assigned for their individual courses. Progress in achieving the academic, social, and civic expectations was reported to families for the first time in February 2015 via letter and through the PowerSchool student/parent portal. Year-to-date summary information on each student's progress in achieving the school-wide 21st century learning expectations will be reported by teachers each marking period in a letter mailed to each student, and course-specific information for each student is available through the student/parent portal in PowerSchool. During interviews with teachers and department chairs, it was apparent that not all teachers have consistent ways of rating students' achievement of the learning expectations. Some teachers use school-wide or district rubrics and others use a score based on a general assessment of student classwork throughout the marking period. In the Endicott survey, 58 percent of parents agree that the school provides them with a formal report which explains their children's progress in achieving school-wide 21st century learning expectations. Sheehan High School has a process in place to report individual student achievement of learning expectations and when there is agreement on how to consistently rate students' achievement of these expectations, students will have a better idea of their progress toward these important goals.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- Endicott survey

Standard 4 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Data is collected, disaggregated, and analyzed by the teachers and administrators at Sheehan High School in many areas to respond to inequities in student achievement. Teachers analyze data from PSAT and CAPT in science. Consistent standardized tests like the CAPT in science is a graduation requirement and science teachers use it to identify students not reaching goal; these students then complete a performance task to show proficiency in reaching graduate expectations in science. Reports from the PSAT given to teachers are general and speak to whole-class cohorts in targeted areas of math and English to identify focus areas. AP potential scores help teachers to recommend individual students for AP level classes. AP score reports are analyzed by teachers and administrators.

Intervention programs place students into programs like the Teacher Student Assistance team (TSA) based on class grades on assessments, discipline reports, observed behaviors. Based on data, an agreed upon plan between the student and team is carried out and monitored by a case manager. Highly specific intervention plans are also in place for students in math and English using analyzed data from the STAR assessment in both math and English and AIMSWEB and IRLA additionally in English. Students not making grade-level benchmark can receive targeted intervention. Further data is collected and the student may exit when they reach grade-level benchmarks. Data from Language Assessment Scales and English Language Proficiency tests identify students for ELL intervention.

Attempts have been made for professional staff to collaborate on targeted data teams to collect, disaggregate, and analyze data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. When the school initially began working in data teams, an outside consultant was hired to instruct teachers on a standard protocol for looking at data and would meet with teams individually to support them in learning the process of analyzing data. The principal hired subs to release teachers for this purpose and some time was used from faculty and department meetings as well. Although this method was effective in getting the teams trained and going, it was not sustainable long-term. Teachers were then asked to use their common planning time within departments and course-specific groups to continue the data team work. Recently, however, collaborative prep periods for data work have been limited as focus on the new evaluation plan, the NEASC self-study, teacher-made Student Learning Objectives focusing on communication, problem solving, argument writing and other 21st century skill expectation initiatives has taken precedence in the last two years. With the establishment of Professional Learning Groups in the 2016 - 2017 school year, the principal expects that the practice of data teams will be re-established. Evidence of formative assessment in classes to inform practice is relatively consistent through observation of classroom practice and student and teacher interviews. A new STAR standardized benchmarking assessment is being used this year to help inform teachers in math and English about student readiness to obtain content in their respective classes. Math teachers have the option of using this data to drive their year-long goals on SLOs while English teachers have used it to understand student reading level with their classes. Teachers note the information has been very useful, especially in English, while math will move toward using it to inform instruction practices after a year of data has been collected. PowerSchool has been used by teachers to collect student results on formative and summative assessments and is beginning to be used to collect information and communicate information on 21st century learning expectations. Students receive the information in real time as it is submitted by teachers. According to the Endicott survey results, 67.1 percent of the Sheehan staff are in agreement that data is used to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. Common district assessments and performance tasks in some departments use common rubrics across the district unifying and clarifying student expectations; however data collection of student results is not uniformly shared with teachers to help inform practice. Ongoing regular analysis of student formative assessment results during collaborative work times such as Professional Learning Groups will inform daily instruction and will support staff efforts to address inequities in student work achievement further augmenting the

faculty's and administration's belief in the importance of early identification for intervention.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Prior to each unit of study, teachers inconsistently communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed. Some teachers provide students with corresponding rubrics prior to summative assessments. Students reported that rubrics are sometimes provided prior to project-based assignments. Many teachers stated that the types of rubrics used are too widely varied and need to be streamlined. Most rubrics seem to be teacher specific while others are either school-wide rubrics or district-wide rubrics, like those frequently used in the math department. Students reported that rubrics are often provided for projects, but the rubrics are aligned with specific content or units of study rather than with 21st century learning expectations. Most students did not indicate that they are aware of specific school-wide rubrics that measure the 21st century learning expectations. According to the Endicott survey, 63.2 percent of Sheehan students agree that their teachers explain what the learning expectations are before each unit of study, while only 53.2 percent of staff agree. Members of the Assessment Standard Committee polled teachers regarding how often they make connections to the applicable 21st century learning expectations when beginning a new unit of study. Thirty-eight faculty members (54 percent of all classroom teachers) responded with the following information: six teachers make the connection all of the time, fifteen teachers make the connection most of the time; fourteen teachers make the connection some of the time; and three teachers do not make the connection at all. Student work from many departments demonstrated the use of school-wide rubrics to focus on writing and communicating effectively. Faculty members expressed interest in making specific connections to the 21st century learning expectations as part of regular practice, but feel that there is a lack of time allotted to this task.

Teachers at Mark T. Sheehan High School introduce students to unit and content-specific objectives which sometimes relate to the 21st century learning expectations as observed in classroom shadowing and in reviewed student work. Limited evidence supports work samples that address the 21st century learning expectations. For example, student work from some departments focus on writing and communicating effectively, however, only small examples of each rubric are used. There was little evidence using the school-wide rubrics in their entirety to assess 21st century learning expectations. Consistently providing students with access to and instruction in the school-wide analytic rubrics will increase student understanding of and achievement on school-wide and course expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- Endicott survey

Standard 4 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Prior to summative assessments, teachers consistently provide students with corresponding rubrics. According to the Endicott survey results, 75.5 percent of Sheehan High School teachers distribute rubrics prior to summative assessments. Students remarked that the use of rubrics is widespread, consistent and allows them to know what is expected of them on all assignments, projects and assessments, both summative and formative. Student work samples and summative assessment samples showed the use of rubrics consistently throughout the school. Departments use rubrics to provide feedback to students on common summative performance tasks distributing specific rubrics to students. Many teachers who provide rubrics before summative assessments incorporate pieces of school-wide rubrics, like problem solving and communication and add course specific expectations. Common district assessments and performance tasks in some departments use common rubrics across the district unifying and clarifying student expectations. Students remarked that they know what is expected of them on assessment and that rubrics help them to understand what is expected of them. Because teachers provide corresponding rubrics prior to summative assessments, students at Sheehan High School have a clear understanding of what is expected of them allowing for improved student achievement.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 6

Conclusions

Teachers at Mark T. Sheehan High School employ a range of assessment strategies, which include both formative and summative assessments. This is supported by the Endicott survey, which indicates that 93.7 percent of staff report that they employ a large variety and range of assessment strategies. Individual teacher assessments and, to a lesser degree, common assessments are part of this variety. Assessments are designed with respect to discipline-specific standards, Common Core Standards, and 21st century learning expectations. Student work, teacher interviews and classroom observations provided evidence that multiple types of assessments are being used in each course. District-wide, teacher-created, and school-wide rubrics are also used to assess student work. Formative assessments observed included warm-up exercises, classroom labs and assignments, writing responses, homework checks, peer check-ins, as well as shared document revision. Summative assessments included quizzes, unit tests, document-based questions, innovative projects, performance-based assessments, technology-infused tasks and portfolios. Sheehan High School is in the process of implementing a Capstone Experience for all students which will allow them to demonstrate their achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations through a researched-based, hands-on or community-centered project. In addition, the district is moving toward mastery-based learning and the Humanities course at the school has been piloting a standards-based grading system. Teachers invite the time to collaborate with each other, building administrators, and district curriculum administrators to create and analyze data from common formative and summative assessments; however, presently this practice is not consistent or widespread. Sheehan staff and administration expressed some frustration with the number of rubrics used in the school (teacher-created, district-wide and school-wide), but the administration is hoping that this will be streamlined in the future as they move toward mastery-based learning. As a result of the wide variety of assessments used in each unit of study, students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of stated learning objectives and course content.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 4 Indicator 7

Conclusions

Teachers inconsistently collaborate in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments. The process of teacher collaboration varies from department to department and course to course. The daily schedule at Sheehan High School allows for teachers in the same department to collaborate on a consistent basis and has evolved recently to support further teacher collaboration within specific courses. However, this scheduled time is not consistent for all courses and the time is not specifically designated for collaboration on assessments since contractually, the teachers are not obligated to meet. Initially, data team meetings were scheduled throughout the year for this purpose and results of the data analysis informed collaborative review and modification of assessments amongst multiple courses taught by different teachers. In past years, as many as six data team meetings were formally scheduled as part of this process but the structure for the meetings was not sustainable over time as teachers were being taken out of classes or duty periods by hiring subs. The common planning time provided for most teachers with their course partners could be used for looking at assessments, however, in the last two years, teachers reported that other initiatives have taken precedence. In the 2016 - 2017 school year, Professional Learning Groups will be implemented and teachers will have a structured opportunity again to look at assessments with their colleagues. Attempts are also being made to unify assessment practices from a district level. District performance tasks in math are given in core areas and graded on a common rubric across each unit. Argument writing has become a focus in English and social studies and is common among classes. Some English and social studies teachers have begun working collaboratively to make the skill of argument writing across disciplines. When time is consistently set aside to collaborate on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments, teachers will benefit from working with their colleagues to inform their assessment strategies.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 8

Conclusions

Most teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work. Many teachers use formative assessment practices to monitor and assess student work in the short term that can provide students with immediate opportunities to revise and/or resubmit their work before the work is formally assessed. Some teachers in English and social studies use Google Docs for students to submit and revise work. In one class, students were given higher order thinking questions in a Google Doc where they could work as a group using questioning strategies from the instructor. This enabled the teacher to make digital comments on a student's work while it was in progress. Using Google Docs is one way that teachers allow students to have multiple opportunities to revise and resubmit their work before it is finally assessed. Teachers also provide immediate feedback to the students via "warm-ups," and additional feedback provided during the subsequent class after evaluating "exit slips." The school-wide rubrics, department rubrics, district rubrics, and teacher-generated rubrics are used frequently to provide feedback for formative assessments. Sixty-eight percent of students indicate on the Endicott survey that teachers provide specific suggestions that enable students to revise and improve their work. In some content areas, students have the opportunity to make test corrections or submit revised versions for written assignments. Based on a recent survey completed by the school, 71 percent of teachers indicated that students are allowed to revise and resubmit their work on a regular basis. When students receive specific, timely, and corrective feedback, they have the opportunity to improve their work and achieve the stated learning goals.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders

Standard 4 Indicator 9

Conclusions

Most teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning. Examples of formative assessments used in the school include “warm-ups,” “exit slips,” the use of individual whiteboards, strategic questioning, and various student response systems such as PollEverywhere, “clickers,” and Kahoot. Assessments such as “do nows” and “exit slips” allow teachers to collect data on the level of understanding either before or after a lesson. This data is used by most teachers to inform instruction and help teachers to determine how to adapt their instruction to meet the needs of their students. During student interviews, the majority of students felt that teachers know the level of their understanding due to the use of class warm-ups, homework checks, and exit slips. Some students commented that they believe it is their responsibility to seek help if they are having difficulty in a course. Because of the length of class periods, most teachers take time to clarify student misconceptions as they arise through discourse and teacher-led discussions showing that adjustments are being made in instructional practices due to formative assessment. Use of worksheets, short assignments, warm-ups, homework checks, and student held white boards are examples of formative practices observed during classroom observations. Teacher evaluation processes give teachers the opportunity to reflect on the practice of formative assessment and its impact on student achievement and continues to be evident as part of the evaluation process during formal teacher observations. When formative assessment is consistently embedded in instruction to inform instructional decisions, teachers have valuable information that helps them determine whether all students are meeting the learning goals.

Sources of Evidence

- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 10

Conclusions

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 student work; common course and common grade-level assessments; individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations; standardized assessments; data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions; survey data from current students and alumni. The self-study indicates that all departments are required to create and administer common summative assessments and that each teacher conducts two to three common assessments per course. It is expected that student work from the common assessments be gathered and examined by teachers according to a standardized protocol. In the past, teachers met monthly in their respective data teams to analyze the results and discuss potential changes to the assessment or the corresponding instruction. Currently, common planning time is used for this purpose in every department, as needed. Although it is expected that student work from the common assessments is gathered and examined by teachers according to a standardized protocol, teachers have not consistently been able to meet monthly in their respective teams to analyze the results and discuss potential changes to the assessment or the corresponding instruction. Teachers examine student work on an inconsistent basis during common planning time and department meetings. There is no formal process for examination of student work, however, it happens informally by individuals and groups of teachers and includes the review of common assessment data.

Individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations is beginning to be examined individually and at a school-wide level. Teachers are assessing students on their attainment of these goals using different means, however, so students are not always aware of how they are being assessed. The school is currently in the process of developing a way to report out school-wide progress in achieving 21st century learning expectations for all students. This data can then be used to inform curriculum and instructional practices. Teachers review data from standardized assessments such as the CAPT in science, the PSAT in English, science and math and eventually, data from the SBAC assessment will be reviewed. Students who struggle in English or math may take the STAR assessment to determine intervention strategies. Data from Language Assessment Scales and English Language Proficiency tests are used to identify students for ELL intervention.

Data from sending schools is conveyed through a cumulative folder kept in the school counseling office for each student. The folder contains past grades, results of standardized testing, attendance and disciplinary records, and photo identification. Special Education and 504 information are included in separate folders for identified students. This information is used to create appropriate schedules and class placement (levels) for incoming students. Sheehan High School schedules transition PPTs and transition 504 meetings in the spring to assure students a smooth transition to high school from their sending schools. These collaborative meetings ensure that Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and 504 accommodations for freshmen will be appropriate when the students arrive in September. When a student transfers from Sheehan to another school, the same information is sent to the receiving school. Post-secondary schools do not send information to Sheehan High School regarding student performance. In addition, the district discontinued an alumni survey, LifeTrack, which at one time was administered to graduates, but this was discontinued in 2010 due to the limited number of responses. The LifeTrack survey followed members of each graduating class for a five-year period of time. The results of these surveys are available in the school counseling and main offices. Development of formal, consistent time for teachers and administrators to work collaboratively to examine data and develop curriculum based on student achievement results will improve instructional practices.

Sources of Evidence

- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- Endicott survey

Standard 4 Indicator 11

Conclusions

Grading and reporting practices are beginning to be regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. A district initiative to move toward mastery-based grading is being implemented, and some teachers commented that this move will eliminate the inconsistency in grading practices and place a greater emphasis on course-specific student achievement results as well as on whole school learning expectations. Expected implementation of mastery-based learning is projected to begin formally in the 2017-2018 school year. Although the current grading platform, PowerSchool, is not able to support a dual grading system, some teachers have started employing strategies to simulate a mastery-based learning system, such as separating "academic achievement" and "habits of work" as two distinct measures within their classes, allowing students to retake assessments after further preparation, rewriting essays after conferencing with teachers, and not giving a grading penalty for late work. These practices indicate an awareness of how grading practices can be reflective of the school's core values and beliefs. However, there is still work to be done to move toward this type of system. Some students interviewed felt that their grades are often more reflective of their effort rather than what they know in a course. Teacher gradebooks are set up independently and teachers have freedom to choose the way grades are calculated in their courses. Some evidence of uniform grading is beginning to be evident within departments. The world languages department, for example, has common grading across classes that demonstrate student achievement in important skill areas. Department members collaborate on this alignment and support consistent grading reporting practices. Currently, the practice of teacher grade reporting is evolving to include 21st century learning expectations, but these do not affect student class grades or graduation requirements. When all teachers ensure that their grading practices are regularly reviewed to ensure alignment with the school's core values, students will benefit from consistent grading across the school that is supportive of their educational needs.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Commendations

Commendation

The established method to communicate individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families

Commendation

The teachers' efforts to collect, disaggregate, and analyze assessment data to respond to inequities in student achievement

Commendation

The practice of providing rubrics to students prior to summative assessments

Commendation

The wide-spread use of rubrics in the school to ensure that students know what is expected of them

Commendation

The school district's plan to move toward a mastery-based assessment system which will provide students with concrete learning targets

Commendation

The use of PowerSchool to report student achievement on the 21st century learning expectations

Commendation

The use of data by the Teacher Student Assistance Team to identify students in need of support to be successful in school

Commendation

The variety of formative and summative assessment strategies used by teachers at Sheehan High School

Standard 4 Recommendations

Recommendation

Ensure a consistent process within the school to assess individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations

Recommendation

Examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice

Recommendation

Review and revise grading practices across all departments to ensure consistency and alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning

Recommendation

Collaborate in formal ways on the creation, analysis and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments

Recommendation

Make connections on a consistent basis to the 21st century learning expectations at the beginning of each unit of study

Recommendation

Streamline the number of rubrics to increase common utilization by staff members in assessing 21st century learning expectations

Recommendation

Ensure formative assessment results are used to inform instruction

Standard 5 Indicator 1

Conclusions

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. According to the 2014 Climate Survey, 90.2 percent of parents responded, "I feel that this school is physically safe." According to the Endicott survey, 73 percent of Sheehan students feel safe at their school. The superintendent, in collaboration with the principal and security committee, continue to prioritize safety of students and staff. For example, the district received two security grants and purchased new cameras and panic buttons, and the high school performs monthly lockdown drills. Day and evening security personnel patrol the school and greeters are located at each entrance to the school. Teachers and students reported that the principal sets the positive tone for the day by greeting students as they enter the school.

Clear behavioral and academic expectations are shared with students and parents via the student handbook, which is available online and provided to students in their daily planner. All athletes must read and follow a code of conduct, which must be signed and returned in order to participate in any sport. Students overwhelmingly reported that discipline is fair and consistent, improving over the past two years. The students believe the assistant principals are fair and consistent when handling issues involving discipline.

It is clear the school and district have developed a number of ways to acknowledge positive student behaviors. A sense of school pride is visible throughout the school. Many student lockers are decorated for games, birthdays, and postings that highlight upcoming school-wide events. School traditions create a bonding and promote school unity and a positive school culture. For example, the school board, parents, students and staff all shared their excitement for the upcoming Powder Puff game versus their rivals. According to one student, and confirmed by many others, "the Powder Puff game was invented at Sheehan, and it's one of the biggest events at our school!" The game is the week of other well-established school traditions, including the student-organized spirit week, the pep rally and Thanksgiving Day football.

The Sheehan faculty works hard to maintain a positive and accepting school climate. Many activities are designed to showcase Sheehan pride and culture. Examples of activities include diversity panel, GoRed drug awareness campaign, Day of Silence, anti-bullying day, spirit week activities, Thanksgiving pep rally, the Carini and Samaha Bowls, Internet safety and Veteran's Day assemblies, freshman orientation, open house night, and the eighth grade visitation day. Beginning in 2011, Sheehan's School Climate Committee has met monthly to discuss additional ways to improve school climate. The School Climate Committee discusses the results of surveys given throughout the year to faculty and staff, parents, and students. Through these results, an updated School Climate Plan was developed and was implemented on November 30th, 2015.

Staff members were proud to report that Sheehan celebrates students who reflect positive behaviors and are actively involved in the process of identifying these students. For example, the Spotlight on Students Award is highlighted through school announcements, shared with the local media and recognized at the Academic Awards program. The students, staff and administration were proud to discuss the Titan Pride award. The Titan Pride recipient is chosen by staff members for positive behavior and acts of kindness. The student receives a Titan logo sticker. The Titan stickers and logos are proudly represented throughout the school, on lockers, doors, student books, walls, and student work. In addition, the Annual Teacher of the Year and Paraprofessional of the Year Awards are presented to members of the faculty who were nominated by colleagues. A building-based selection committee reviews all nominations.

There is also a graduation requirement that all students are to complete at least 30 hours of community service, although many students complete more than the recommended amount of service hours. This requirement has

fostered a positive relationship between student and community and, according to parents, the students leave Sheehan with a great understanding the school motto, "We Seek to Serve Humanity". The district's and school's commitment to student and staff safety, combined with numerous school traditions that connect students, staff, and community, contribute to the safe, positive, respectful and supportive culture at Sheehan High School.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- facility tour
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Indicator 2

Conclusions

Mark T. Sheehan High School is making steps toward being equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity and supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. The faculty and staff endeavor to provide equitable access to courses and to create an inclusive learning environment. Each 9th grade student is enrolled in a heterogeneously grouped Contemporary Global Issues course and there are other heterogeneous courses throughout the school in both academic course electives, arts and vocational electives and PE and health courses. However, there are five levels of courses and not all levels provide the appropriate level of challenge for students. The lowest level of courses, basic and general, are described by teachers to be aimed toward students who need a slower pace and more individual attention. Unfortunately, activities in these classes were observed as lacking challenge and student engagement was very limited. In several basic and general level classrooms observed, half or less than half of the students were actively engaged in the lessons being taught. Academic classes had much more student engagement, however, classroom activities in these courses also lacked challenge and involved mainly recall of information rather than application or synthesis. Honors and Advanced Placement courses were observed to contain appropriate levels of challenge, opportunities for higher order thinking and authentic learning experiences for application of knowledge.

It is anticipated that the district's move toward a mastery-based learning model will support a system where the needs of students at all learning levels are addressed, with each student held to the same set of challenging standards. The standards are currently being developed by the district and will articulate what a student must know and be able to do in order to earn a high school diploma. The use of these standards will allow teachers to identify a student's academic needs and tailor instruction to meet those needs. The use of standards will also provide transparency and consistency among teachers, with the end result being that all students will be prepared for college, work and life. It is expected that the current leveling system will also be addressed as the district moves the high schools toward the mastery-based learning model under the oversight of the Great Schools Partnership. To promote equity and heterogeneous grouping, the principal at Sheehan had previously proposed unleveling the ninth grade in all classes; however, central office and Lyman Hall did not support the proposal. The district requires that the two high schools offer a similar program in the core areas. Additional progress in the area of heterogeneous grouping will require support at the district level. The principal has requested that the district reconvene a district committee to discuss high school levels, which has not met since 2013.

Other programs that promote equitable and inclusive opportunities for students are Peer Supporting Peer and the ELL program. Throughout the entire visit, the Peer Supporting Peer program was amplified with pride through student discussions, parent panel meetings, as well as in discussions with teachers and staff during committee meetings and individual conversations. The implementation of this program seems to have increased the amount of inclusion that encourages proper role modeling between mainstream students and students with special needs. Mainstream students are proud to be involved and since the creation of this program, there is a waiting list to be a part of Peer Supporting Peers. Because of the high level of compassion and inclusion this program has culminated, the stigma between mainstream students and students with special needs has been decreased significantly. Although the school is making strides toward becoming equitable and inclusive and promoting more heterogeneity, ensuring that all students have access to challenging academic experiences regardless of the course or level will give all students opportunities to maximize their potential and achieve the 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Mark T. Sheehan High School has implemented a formal, ongoing program or process 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 21st century learning expectations. The development of advisory sessions for each student in the school has increased the personal and social integration for students. Each student is assigned to an advisory starting in grade 9 and keeps that advisory teacher until graduation. With the support of SADD, Human Relations Club, Environmental Action Club, National Honor Society and other student organizations, the school principal coordinates the design of detailed plans and also utilizes district-developed lessons on topics including confidence building, academic success, goal setting, choices, anti-bullying, responsibility, school spirit, study skills, organization, conflict resolution, community service, and college selection, which are provided for discussion and completion during advisory meetings. Advisory endeavors to encourage students to engage in meaningful and relevant conversations concerning educational and life skills. Advisory creates an opportunity for students to develop a relationship with an adult member of the school community and acquire skills in 21st century learning expectations. Students reported that they feel most advisory teachers do participate in the activities and most students seem to have a great relationship with their advisory teacher. In addition, many students stated that they value the advice and help from their advisory teachers. Parents were not really sure about what topics are being covered in advisory but were relatively happy that their students had a consistent teacher in the school to bond with. Teachers report that there are generally 12-15 students in each advisory, but that number may change due to students moving in and out of the district. Teachers were generally positive toward advisory, and enjoy the opportunity to create and maintain student relationships on a long-term basis. Overall, the addition of advisory to the students has given the opportunity for every student in the building to connect with an adult and to build relationships that support the school culture and assist in social integration.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- facility tour
- teachers
- students
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Indicator 4

Conclusions

In efforts to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff at Mark T. Sheehan High School work hard to encourage staff to engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, 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. Staff members routinely engage in reflection and ongoing conversations about student learning, best practices, teaching strategies, and curriculum development through department and faculty meetings, data teams, professional development (PD) workshops, and common planning time. School leaders promote discussion of student learning and well-being by sharing literature on best practices. During faculty and department meetings, the principal and staff engage in professional discourse about 21st century learning expectations, including implementing NEASC requirements, standards-based grading, PBIS, differentiated instruction, and other important educational practices. Full-day, half-day, and after-school PD sessions provide opportunities for staff to collaborate and improve teaching practices. During the 2014-2015 school year, the staff participated in five full days, six half days, and five two-hour after school sessions for professional development. Examples include staff participation in team-building activities, self-directed PD, and goal setting.

Sheehan staff members attend professional development outside the school system. Some recent examples include participating in NEASC visits, PBIS, the League of Innovative Schools, and curriculum writing workshops through ACES (Area Cooperative Educational Services). In the last couple of years, money has been allocated directly to the school for the purpose of professional development, and many staff members have received full reimbursement for registration fees and if needed, hotel expenses. In meetings with department heads and teachers, however, some staff members reported that funds or substitute coverage for professional development outside the school is not always available. The principal disagreed, however, stating that she has funds for outside professional development, but many teachers do not request it and as a result, it often goes unused. In addition, the district has capped the number of teachers from the district that can be out on the same day in order to attend a conference or workshop. This creates a first come/first served situation if a teacher requests to go out on a day where the maximum number of requests has been met.

Teachers and staff enjoy collaboration with one another across the disciplines and with the sister school, Lyman Hall High School. The district incorporates five full PD days and seven early release days to give teachers and staff time to collaborate about curriculum, teaching practices and other topics. However, according to the Endicott survey only 35.5 percent of staff feel that the topics covered during PD are helpful with improving instruction and assessment. This idea was supported in discussions with administration and teacher interviews. Due to the fact that the topics must be agreed upon district-wide, it can make it difficult at the building level to promote individuality and differentiate learning for teachers. As a result of some of the topics being district-wide, building staff lose time to have regular departmental collaboration as well as time to collaborate with other departments on improvement of instruction, technological skills, and curriculum. As a result of the professional culture for learning at Sheehan High School, teachers have the opportunity to engage in professional discourse, maintain currency with best practices, and dedicate formal time to professional development. More opportunities for differentiation and choice in determining professional development activities will ensure that teachers are invested in their professional learning and are able to apply it in order to improve their curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- central office personnel
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 5

Conclusions

School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning. Wallingford Public Schools has adopted the Connecticut System for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED) model. The SEED model includes research-based evaluation and supervision processes, in which school leaders evaluate teaching and learning, both formally and informally, using the state-generated SEED rubrics. The SEED model uses the Connecticut Common Core of Effective Teaching (CCT) Rubric and the Connecticut Common Core of Effective Service Delivery (CCSD) Rubric to evaluate staff members. The state rubrics were revised in 2014 and the domain indicators from the original CCT rubrics were consolidated and reorganized. The district teacher evaluation committee has also made changes as to how the Indicators of Academic Growth and Development need to be written. Both administrators and teachers have strong feelings that the lack of consistency of the evaluation tool from year to year has made it difficult for them to establish routines, set clear expectations, and collect meaningful data that makes connections between the impact evaluations have on student learning. They do concur, however, that the strength of the process is face-to-face communication as teachers and administrators discuss student learning goals, instructional strategies and each teacher's goals. Teachers positively responded to the ability to work collaboratively, setting team goals. All three Sheehan administrators were required to attend a multi-day training provided by ACES before they could implement the Wallingford SEED Model. When the Wallingford SEED Model sets and maintains clear expectations, teachers will be able to collect meaningful data that will impact student learning and will benefit from evaluator feedback based on clear expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 6

Conclusions

The organization of time adequately supports research-based instruction and appropriate time for the learning needs of all students, however, currently, there is minimal time for collaboration among teachers. The 84-minute alternate day block schedule allows for longer instructional time to promote student engagement, in-depth exploration of topics, and project-based learning. Attempts are made to create collaboration in the schedule by department through communication with the assistant principal overseeing scheduling and the department heads. Not all teachers in all departments have common planning time, and those teachers that do have it, are not contractually required to use it for this purpose, although many do. Department heads are involved in the scheduling process, determining, with teacher input, the recommended courses to run and courses teachers will teach based on student course selections.

To address the learning needs of all students, department chairs reported that students schedules can provide a structured study, additional AP lab, reading and math intervention, and Peers Supporting Peers to assist students with special needs. In addition, the schedule allows students to attend the Educational Center for the Arts (ECA) in New Haven, run by ACES, and programs housed at Lyman Hall, including Medical Careers, Independent and Community Employment Training (ICE-T), and Alternative Route to Success (ARTS). As a result of 84-minute alternating block schedule, longer instructional time allows for more in-depth learning, increased student engagement in their learning, flexibility to allow for supports for struggling learners and the ability for students to attend activities housed outside the school. There is an effort to provide common planning time for teachers to collaborate, share data and discuss curriculum, but is not consistent within and across departments, and does not include all teachers. Therefore, it is difficult for teachers to work with their department heads, collectively develop common assessments, and look at student work and data to help guide instruction. The plan to institute Professional Learning Groups in 2016 - 2017 which would meet for 42 minutes every other day should help to resolve this concern. The allocation of the alternate day block scheduling has given teachers a reasonable amount of time to incorporate research-based instruction and the ability to understand the learning needs of all students and when teachers have agreed upon collaboration time during the school day, they will have structured time to work together to support effective practice.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Indicator 7

Conclusions

For the most part, student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. According to the Endicott survey, 81.9 percent of students, 59.5 percent of staff and 72.7 percent of parents are in "total agreement" that the class size and student load at Sheehan High School meet the learning needs of individual students. Teachers interviewed agree that the majority of their classes are within targeted goals of under twenty-five students per class, with exceptions. For example, in the 2014-2015 school year, there were 16 classes that were over 25 students, with English classes as high as 29 students. Department chairs explained that class sizes are discussed with the assistant principal during the scheduling process, with the goal of scheduling classes with 25 or fewer students. Tours of the building, in-class observations and student interviews confirmed that class sizes are reasonable and vary somewhat from class to class depending on the course. Classes such as music or physical education will have larger class sizes, while some classes are smaller due to the nature of the course or the ability of students. Students also reported that class sizes are sufficient, providing them the opportunity to receive appropriate attention and support from their teachers. Since the majority of classes are within reasonable limits, for the most part, teachers are able to meet the learning needs of individual students.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 8

Conclusions

The principal is an instructional leader in the building living and modeling the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The principal is visible in the building during the school day and at after school activities. The principal greets students and staff daily as they enter the building and is visible at many school events, such as dances, musicals, sporting and drama events. The principal, assistant principals and department heads meet monthly during cabinet meetings to discuss instruction, budget, master schedule and other operational items. Each administrator is involved in departmental oversight to coordinate efforts. For example, the principal takes an active role in the science curriculum management team, advocating for the number of hours in experimentation during labs in the middle and high school. The principal created and implemented the Peers Supporting Peers Internship, which was widely reported as a very successful program by students and staff alike. This program connects a special needs student with a peer model. The students involved in this internship report that it is "one of the best opportunities for students to help students at the school."

The principal sets high standards for the faculty. When hiring staff, the principal strives to find teachers with strong content background and best practice skills. Additionally, the principal began the Spotlight on Student award. This award highlights a different student each month in a different department. Along with the two assistant principals, the principal is in the process of developing a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) process to assess the school and its journey toward accomplishing the strategic plan. This process is new this year, and performed in collaboration with central office and other secondary schools in the district via Google Docs and in-person meetings. The principal thoughtfully coordinates the advisory program and oversees the development of the curriculum with the help of a district high school team and lessons contributed by student groups. She also collaborates with her administrative team to implement professional development opportunities during scheduled faculty meetings. For example, staff were involved in a grading activity to focus awareness on grading practices at the school. It is typical for the principal to lead staff in professional learning at meetings referencing books and articles on educational best practice, including work by Marzano and other educational experts. In addition, the principal in collaboration with the professional development committee, organizes and implements numerous professional development opportunities for Sheehan faculty during designated PD days and after-school PD sessions. Topics include team building at Bertini Park, NEASC preparation, school-wide rubric creation and revision, and the new evaluation program (SEED). The principal is visible and present during the school day, and is actively involved in supporting students in their extracurricular endeavors. Teachers and students acknowledge the principal for being extremely visible in what the superintendent referred to as "the school that never sleeps." She models learning expectations with staff through development of professional development opportunities, leading faculty meetings with instructional best practice, and is instrumental in working with the science department. As a result of the principal's visibility, and emphasis on leading and modeling instruction in coordination with her leadership team, the core values, beliefs and learning expectations are clearly embedded in the school culture.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 9

Conclusions

Teachers, students, and parents are given the opportunity to become involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership. Teachers contribute to decision-making within in the school and district, and administration hears teacher voices through the liaison committee, cabinet meetings, TSA, PBIS, technology committee, school-based professional development committee, School Climate Committee, and hiring committees. The liaison committee gives teachers an opportunity to raise building level concerns to administration and helps to clarify many school policies and routines for the faculty at large; for example, the assignment of teacher duties and issues with the cleanliness of the building. According to the principal, the committee is a contractual obligation and there are many other avenues for teachers to voice concerns.

Parent Teacher Advisory Council (PTAC) which is a monthly meeting hosted by the principal, is an open-ended discussion session among parents, teachers, and the principal. Parents and teachers have the opportunity to question and understand different policies and directives within the building. According to past meeting notes, meetings with parents and the Endicott survey, parents seem mostly satisfied that they are given a say in decisions and defining roles within the building. Parents have stated that they feel their voices are heard at these meetings, however, many of the same parents participate each time which can lead to this council only getting feedback from a small group. A yearly school climate survey is also given by the School Climate Committee. This survey indicated that overall, parents feel valued in the decision-making process with the school. Parent panel meetings also disclosed that if there is a true need to meet with administration, it is done in a reasonable amount of time.

Students have meaningful and defined roles in decision-making through the student council and other student activities and organizations. The principal has an open door policy and is available to meet with students to discuss issues and concerns as they arise. At the district level, a student representative, usually the Student Council president, reports at monthly Board of Education (BOE) meetings on student events such as fundraisers, blood drives, sports, plays, and presentations. Parents, students and staff are also given opportunities to have access to the principal through emails, phone and via the school website. There are monthly newsletters by the principal posted to the website and several weekly emails to keep parents informed about information pertinent to school decisions. Parents, teachers, and students are also provided with a very detailed events calendar. The parent calendar contains dates of school and district meetings, sporting events, guidance events, as well as college and career fairs during the year. By having access well in advance to these dates, parents, students, and staff have the ability to attend those meetings if necessary. By providing meaningful decision-making roles for teachers, students, and parents, many stakeholders feel they have a voice in decisions in the school community.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school leadership

- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 10

Conclusions

Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning. Teachers serve on, and are actively engaged in, leading committees that review and revise curriculum, assessment strategies, instructional practices, and school organization practices. Teachers take on leadership roles in various clubs, organizations, sports teams, and committees to recommend, implement, and lead ways to improve school climate and student engagement. Some examples are School Climate Committee, TSA case managers, school technology committee, Superintendent's Faculty Council, Capstone Committee, curriculum management teams, standards-based grading committee, Unified Sports, the Variety Show, spirit week, Titan Pride recognition program, PBIS team, and numerous blood drives.

Teacher Student Assistance (TSA) meetings help teachers exercise initiative and leadership. By meeting as a group with a student who is struggling with academics and organization, it is helpful for teachers to collaborate for the individual student. Teachers are given the opportunity to work together in suggesting ways to improve or to offer support for the student and family. Evidence from committee panels, teacher interviews, and the self-study indicate that in all, teachers have the ability to exercise leadership and initiative from this worthwhile collaboration. Other means for teachers to exercise leadership and initiative stem from the many committees that teachers have either formed or have been asked to form. Some teachers have the opportunity to participate on a PD committee so that the topics for PDs are based on the needs of staff. Teachers are also given the opportunity to participate in self-directed professional development. Teachers can choose which topics they wish to participate in or can spend time catching up on things in his/her own classroom. By owning part of the PD process, teachers can exercise effective initiatives and leadership skills essential to improvement of the school and to have the ability to increase students' engagement in learning. Finally, the School Climate Committee and Sheehan Sunshine Committee are both teacher-run groups that improve the overall climate and life of the school. Teachers, school counseling personnel, and administrators collaborate frequently with students and families to solve problems and engage students in learning. The impact of these committees and opportunities for leadership have led to a sense of pride and ownership of teachers and their ultimate impact on students. Because teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school, all staff and students benefit from their efforts and teachers feel ownership in their work.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 11

Conclusions

The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. The superintendent indicated, confirmed by the school board and principal, that three monthly meetings occur, involving the principal and superintendent. Agenda items include assessment of current district initiatives, and new potential initiatives that contribute toward implementation of the strategic plan. According to the self-study, the central office administrators also meet monthly with all of the building administrators in the district to collaborate and address all of the schools' progress toward the district's core values and beliefs, reflect on and revise antiquated systems that may still be in place, and continue the constructive discussion about student learning in each of the respective buildings. The building principal, in conjunction with the superintendent, also meets with business owners in town for Business Think Tank meetings where local business owners can share their ideas about what skills students will need in order to succeed in the workplace, collaborate on curriculum ideas and shifts, and reflect upon what skills students are currently graduating with and ways to improve or enhance those skills during and after high school. The school board meets three times a month with the superintendent, with all meetings open to the public. The first Monday the meetings involve "policy and curriculum." The second Monday include "operational" issues and the last Monday of the month concludes with a live televised meeting with an agreed upon agenda. The board is active in the decision-making process that impacts the district and school. According to the school board chair, the board's mindset on implementing new initiatives is "will all students benefit?" As a result of the collaborative, reflective, and constructive work between and among the board of education, superintendent, and principal, students are more effectively supported as they strive to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership

Standard 5 Indicator 12

Conclusions

The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school and have communicated that authority through the job description and district policies. The school board, superintendent, principal, and parents all agree that the principal has sufficient decision-making authority. However, 73.4 percent of the staff either disagree or are undecided about whether the school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. The principal is working collaboratively with the superintendent on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) protocol to assess school successes, areas of need, and plan for improvement. The principal is responsible to carry out the recommendations from the SWOT assessment. The perception of principal autonomy appears to be hindered by numerous district initiatives and a district requirement to maintain equity between the two high schools in the district. The district desire for equity has imposed challenges for the principal and the staff as they attempt to establish programs aligned specific to the climate and culture of Mark T. Sheehan High School. An example of this is the inconsistent use of school-wide rubrics. Both the superintendent and the principal concurred that the focused use of the rubrics has been hindered as they pursue the district implementation of mastery-based learning. District curriculum initiatives, that also must be equitable for both high schools, is another example where the perceived “top down” decision-making impacts the staff perception of the principal's autonomy. The school board understands Sheehan's core values and beliefs and fully supports comprehensive course offerings at the high school. The “Wallingford 100”, a program designed to ensure personal success after high school for 100 percent of Wallingford students, is an example of the principal's programs and policies having a direct impact on the achievement of this goal. The school board, the superintendent, and the principal collaborate on school-based policies for staff selection, evaluation, professional development, and school improvement to ensure student success. The principal also oversees the operational budget once funds are approved and allocated by superintendent and school committee. There is clear evidence of communication between and among the principal, superintendent, and school board, with three monthly meetings at the district level, and three monthly meetings offered by the school board. An established communication process, shared expectations, and a balance between district and school-based initiatives, have resulted in the principal having sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school.

Sources of Evidence

- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Commendations

Commendation

The efforts of the school community to build a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations

Commendation

The outreach by staff to make sure all students feel connected to more than one adult in the building which has had a positive effect on students feeling accepted and included

Commendation

The culture of professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning fostered by the principal

Commendation

The district commitment to reasonable class sizes and student load

Commendation

The installation of panic buttons and security cameras to improve school safety

Commendation

The implementation of programs that directly support the implementations of the school's core values and beliefs such as Peer Supporting Peers, the Student Spotlight Award, and advisory

Commendation

The instructional leadership of the principal who models the core values and beliefs through her leadership on a daily basis

Commendation

The consistent meeting of PTAC that has allowed parents a detailed, inside understanding to the procedures, decisions and events going on at Sheehan High School

Commendation

The opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles which directly correlate to the improvement of student learning and a positive school culture

Commendation

The consistency of collaboration among the superintendent, school board, and principal

Standard 5 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to decrease the number of levels within the school to ensure an equitable and inclusive learning environment and provide an appropriate level of challenge for all students

Standard 6 Indicator 1

Conclusions

Mark T. Sheehan High 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 21st century learning expectations. Faculty and administration have spent a great deal of time and resources evaluating the support structure of the school and ensuring that it adequately meets the needs of students. Classroom teachers view support services personnel as integral to the success of students achieving their goals in conjunction with the 21st century learning expectations. To assist in identifying the students that are the most at-risk, all incoming freshmen are screened to see if they qualify for intervention services in the math and reading areas. Intervention services are provided by two staff members, one part-time reading interventionist teaches three classes and one math interventionist teaches two intervention classes in addition to regular courses. Students who do not initially qualify for intervention services, yet find themselves struggling in their classes, are identified by their counselor and a meeting is scheduled to identify areas of concern.

The Bridge Academy, held in August, is a Wallingford district-based program that works with incoming freshmen who might have difficulty with the transition to high school. This four-day program teaches at-risk students some of the skills and strategies necessary to have a successful transition to high school. There are also credit recovery options for freshman students in math and English classes. Students are offered the option of completing two credits of work through a summer school program at their own cost. Families on free/reduced lunch can request that the summer school fee be waived or reduced. This expense can and has been waived on a family-by-family basis. Additionally, upperclassmen can petition the principal, on a case-by-case basis, for permission to earn credits in programs outside the school district. There is an Educational Enhancement Program (EEP), designed as an alternative to the traditional high school classroom. Students attend in an alternative setting with an emphasis on personalized learning in small group settings. Admission to this district-wide program is determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with a student's social and emotional needs.

School counselors collaborate with case managers, teachers, and administrators to support students' needs. These efforts are designed to enhance school climate and support student engagement. Supports for students include an after-school study hall where students can go for support two days a week. There is also a late bus three days a week so that all students can stay for extra help. The school psychologists are the first to evaluate students if they are having difficulty in their private lives. Both school psychologists meet with students to address individual needs. The school nurse provides health services, specifically with evaluations that may lead to an emergency action plan (EAP) for that student or further referral to more expert personnel in the community. Students whose primary issues lie in language difficulties may be evaluated and if determined to be an English language learner (ELL), will get supplemental assistance. The ELL teacher is a full-time position and supports 16 students.

The Teacher Student Assistance Team (TSA) is regarded as the front line strategy for identifying and supporting students in need of special help. It meets to discuss and assist students who are not identified as special education or who do not have a 504 plan. The team includes the principal, along with a core group of teachers, the school psychologists, the student's school counselor, and the student. The team discusses the impediments, both academic and social, that students face and coordinates a plan to help them achieve success.

The school-wide advisory program was initiated in 2005 and aims to connect each student with an adult member of the school community. The topics of advisory sessions are generated by a district-wide advisory committee, student-led organizations in the school as well as the school principal. Many of the lessons are designed to provide social and civic lessons in ethical and moral behavior. The focus of the groups has been reaching out to students and developing relationships between peers and adults. The program has been growing in success and

teachers feel they are forming valuable connections with their advisory groups. Mark T. Sheehan High School has a wide variety of timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students. These interventions are pervasive and embraced across the school. As a result, at-risk students are identified, addressed, and placed into appropriate programs to support their achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 2

Conclusions

Mark T. Sheehan High School provides an extensive amount of information to families about available student support services in a variety of ways. The school communicates to all parents through the school's website, a principal newsletter and a parent F.A.Q. booklet. Ninth grade students are welcomed into the school through a series of events beginning with an 8th grade visitation program in the fall, an 8th grade evening parent and student presentation, a freshman orientation program, a 9th grade parents program, and freshman orientation lessons presented by the school counselors. Parents can regularly access information about course selection and college planning through the school counseling webpage. The counseling department has developed a post-high school planning guide for juniors and seniors and their parents, and regularly hosts evening programs on topics of parent and student interest. The school's athletic director sends out numerous updates regarding results, cancellations, accomplishments, and general news via Twitter. The athletic director also requires each team to conduct a pre-season players and parents meeting to go over team rules, academic expectations, sportsmanship as well as parental expectations. The athletic department also hosts an eighth grade sports informational night in the spring for those parents who have student athletes entering the high school in the fall and hosts three seasonal awards nights that acknowledge team and individual athletic and academic accomplishments throughout the year.

Information for those students most in need of student support services is provided in a consistent manner. Notification of Planning and Placement Meetings is provided to parents through mailings annually. The College and Career Center communicates events to parents via School Messenger system. Staff working with ELL students communicate with parents through quarterly progress reports and parent meetings offered both in the evenings and mornings to accommodate parent work schedules. According to the Endicott survey, 66 percent of parents report that the school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services. When interviewed, parents reinforced a similar sentiment emphasizing the importance of the PTAC (Parent-Teacher Advisory Council), and agreed that there are many services for struggling students. As a result of the information provided to families about student support services, parents and students are aware of help that is available to assist them as they work to meet their academic and personal goals.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- parents
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Mark T. Sheehan High School support services staff frequently use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student. Teachers demonstrated the widespread use of PowerSchool as a portal to communicate grade information to students and parents. Many organizations use Twitter accounts to disseminate updates and information about different groups and activities taking place in and outside the school community. Students explained the many ways that Naviance, a web-based program used by students and parents, is used as a future planning tool by both the school counseling and college and career departments. With the help of school counseling staff, students use it to investigate careers, post-secondary options, and navigate the school application process. An electronic portfolio houses the Student Success Plans and follows the student from grades 6 through 12. Students with Individual Education Plans (IEP) have their file managed by IEP Direct, which ensures continuity of language and format across all special education managers.

Library personnel use technology to coordinate their services by using the Follet Destiny library management software. Destiny software also allows students and teachers to create lists of materials that they would like by logging into the system and creating a bookshelf. Sheehan's library utilizes the state's iConn databases. However the library lacks a comprehensive set of online databases that would support effective implementation of Common Core writing and research standards and the development of 21st century skills for students. The library blog lists new book purchases and is updated by student interns. Students who have frequent disciplinary actions have them recorded in PowerSchool, in order to ensure that all of the support staff will have access to this information when assisting the student. The school counselors and the psychologists review recent actions taken to correct a student's behavior by the assistant principals to counsel them toward more proactive behaviors. This information is also entered into the School-Wide Information Service (SWIS) to provide proper Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS).

Many methods are used to reach parents and students to inform them of job fairs, college representative visits, and other events. There is a full-time college and career specialist that was previously split between the two high schools, but this year she is spending all her time at Sheehan and another specialist was hired to serve the students at Lyman Hall. The career specialist, in conjunction with the school counseling department, holds a post-secondary fair with a wide representation of post-high school options including colleges, military agencies, technical schools, and public service careers. The office posts information on a whiteboard outside the classroom, uses mass mailings, the public information TVs in the common areas, School Messenger, Twitter, email and the Naviance system to publicize these important events. As a result of the strategic integration of data management systems and the use of multiple information communication systems, Sheehan High School is delivering an effective range of coordinated services for each student.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- students
- central office personnel
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Mark T. Sheehan High School has an adequate number of school counseling services and certified/licensed personnel and support staff who regularly deliver a written, developmental program; meet regularly with students and families to provide personal, academic, career and college counseling; consistently engage in individual and group meetings with students; deliberately collaborate with outreach agencies and the community to connect students and families with services that they are unable to provide within the school system and consciously seek feedback and data from all stakeholders for the purpose of improving services to ensure that each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. School counseling services has an adequate number of certified and licensed personnel to support the school mission and core values. There are currently three full-time counselors and a full-time counseling department head and two school psychologists. There is also part-time assistance provided by the social worker and psychologist. The Endicott survey reports that 65 percent of students feel comfortable going to their school counselor. Similarly, 63 percent of parents indicate that they feel there is an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff for the school counseling services.

There is a clear developmental program that the counseling department follows to ensure student success. The school board-approved curriculum documents identify the expectations of the counseling departments throughout the district, and Sheehan has expanded upon that framework in order to provide the most robust program possible. In total, this plan is termed the "Student Success Plan" with the goal of making sure that every student finds success at the high school level. To deliver this program, every grade is instructed by school counselors in age-appropriate topics. The school counseling department has prepared several guides for parents and students that help navigate the post-secondary planning.

PSAT review and instruction is introduced as a precursor to testing for college success. The use of Naviance is prominent throughout the counseling experience; students continually set academic, career, and personal/social goals in Naviance during classroom developmental guidance lessons. Students track interests leading them to college and career selection in a collaborative setting with their parents and counselor. Students take a career inventory in Naviance as a sophomore, which is then linked to course selection. Course selection is based on future career interests or to allow students to explore options. As juniors, students conduct a post-secondary search in Naviance to generate a list of schools for further exploration, and also allow teachers to submit their college recommendations for students through it as well, making for a seamless digital environment to organize students' lives. Naviance also forms the foundation for the coordination of the counseling session, as it hosts and aggregates the data in one place so that they can discuss the results of student work together.

Counselors meet frequently with students in a variety of venues that are timed during the year to meet the needs of the students at their given grade level. The Endicott survey reports that 54 percent of parents feel that school counseling personnel meet regularly with their son/daughter to discuss personal, academic, career and college planning topics. By the middle of October, the school counseling department has delivered developmental guidance lessons at each grade level, therefore having seen every student in the school. While the developmental guidance lessons are being conducted, counselors are meeting with seniors individually regarding the application process and are meeting freshmen to get to know them as a follow up to a classroom lesson related to academic success and making the most of high school. Each student has an individual course selection appointment to discuss course programming and future goals. Juniors and their parents meet with counselors to discuss post-high school plans. Individually, the counselors support the Student Success Plans of their students and adapt to student needs on a regular basis. For example, students who experience academic difficulty or who are having personal problems are met with multiple times each marking period so that appropriate supports can be provided.

The self-study reports a strong connection between Sheehan High School and outside agencies to provide services for students and families when the structures within the system are inadequate. Students with more serious issues are first referred to the school social worker or school psychologist for support in school. In addition, outside agencies may also be recommended to support the student. Parents often seek referrals to outside agencies as well. A release can be signed allowing school support staff to communicate with the outside agency in order to best meet the needs of the student. The school psychologists and counselors also work with the following community organizations: Department of Children and Families (DCF) Voluntary Services, DCF Probationary Services, mental health practitioners, Medicaid, BRS (Bureau of Rehabilitation Services), and the Quinncipiac Chamber Summer Youth Employment Program.

There is a great deal of assessment data which goes into the administration of the counseling program. Recently, at the recommendation of the CREC Program Review, the School Counseling Advisory Committee, a group consisting of parents, students, faculty, and members of the business community, developed a needs assessment and review of current practices. Information was gathered to evaluate the curriculum of the school counseling department. This will help the department assess and revise their services to meet the needs of their stakeholders. Counselors conduct an exit survey for seniors in order to generate the Strategic School Profile; the information is considered when planning future programming. Feedback is also solicited through exit surveys following evening presentations to families. The counseling staff reviews these surveys in order to revamp programs to best meet the needs of the families.

The college and career center program has a full-time college and career specialist for the first time this year. The highlights of the program include a college fair with over 80 universities and colleges attending, school-based college representative visits in the fall and spring, internships through the state's pilot program, and job shadowing. The program is currently not a requirement for students and is entirely service based. Through the regular delivery of a written program, and of the counseling services staff, and as a result of additional and recent reallocation of support staff, the quality of school counseling services are enhanced to provide students with comprehensive counseling to include personal, academic, career, and college counseling.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- parents
- Endicott survey
- school website

Standard 6 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Mark T. Sheehan High School's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who provide preventative health services and direct intervention services. One full-time registered nurse and a part-time certified nursing assistant provide the health services at the school. During times of screening and reviewing, an additional RN, who is a floating nurse in the district, provides additional support. The nurse's office completes annual vision and postural screening, vaccination and immunization status and reporting, and monitoring of sports physicals and state mandated tenth grade physicals. The nurse screens student records prior to field trips, performs medicinal administration training, EpiPen training and blood-borne pathogen training for staff members.

All services to students and staff are reported and charted on paper and student health records are kept on paper. The nurse believes that the addition of an electronic charting and record keeping system would speed up the process of serving students, help eliminate errors and make reporting significantly easier. The nurse tracks monthly visit volume, delineating specific incidents such as glucose checks, medication administration and general treatment. This report is handwritten and presented monthly to the nursing coordinator and the Board of Education. The reporting has prompted the hiring of additional CNAs for the district and the floating/substitute nurse. Currently, only medical conditions are noted in PowerSchool, denoted with an icon. The nurse provides lists of information about students with medical precautions, food allergies or care plans directly to teachers.

According to the Endicott survey, 69 percent of parents agree that the health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff. Similarly, 70 percent of parents agree that the health services personnel provide preventative health care and direct intervention services. Sixty-four percent of students report feeling comfortable going to the school nurse for services. Interviews with the school nurse revealed that although the office is able to provide all services and screenings, serving every student in a timely manner is sometimes challenging. The physical space and location of the nursing suite is adequate for the services that are provided. The nurse's office maintains contact with other providers of health services or screenings. Students are often referred directly to local clinics for immunization such as Meriden Healthcare or CVS Minute Clinic. Students who may have sustained an injury while playing a sport are referred to the Ortho-Ouch Clinic, an outpatient/walk in clinic, for x-rays and assessment. As often as possible, the office follows up with instructions provided by outside health providers and passes allowable information along to teachers and staff. Because the school health services at Mark T. Sheehan High School provide high quality health services to students, they are better able to reach their educational goals.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 6

Conclusions

Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified personnel and support staff who provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum. The school has one library media specialist and a library assistant to assist with providing resources for students and staff. Instructionally, all freshmen receive an orientation identifying what plagiarism is and how they can avoid it with explicit instruction in MLA formatting and the use of Turnitin to support students completion of assignments throughout their four years. Personalized and individual instruction is provided to students by the library media specialist on Google Apps, video production, and other technologies. The library is a welcoming place for students and faculty to pursue 21st century learning.

The Sheehan Library is first and foremost a place of independent learning which limits the fidelity with which resources are shared, content is delivered, and research skills are integrated into the curriculum. On the Endicott survey only 19.8 percent of students report using the library often during their classes. The facility is available and staffed for students and teachers one-half hour before school begins for distribution of materials, assistance, and access to resources. During the day it is available all four periods of the school day, and after school between one and two hours for clubs and independent use. The Endicott survey results indicate that 75 percent of students find the library to be accessible before, during, and after school. This data was confirmed through the School Resource Standard Subcommittee meeting and student shadowing discussions. During the visit observations revealed that the library media center was full throughout the school day with students from study hall. The floor plan is open with seating that supports both collaborative and independent work. The library media specialist would like to see the creation of a designated space for small collaborative groups to engage in 21st century learning activities. This space would be adjacent to, but separate from the open library floor plan. There are 60 Chromebooks available to loan and 42 desktop computers.

The librarian supports teachers through a variety of professional development activities he provides throughout the year in small groups and on an individual basis, such as Google Apps for education training and video production lessons given to individual departments. As technology demands have increased, it has been the special mission of the library program to include common-sense methods of using technology to inform teachers as to the value of technology in their lessons. It provides an opportunity to discuss the alignment of the library curriculum on a one-to-one consultation basis. At the end of the year, many classes use the library for culminating projects based on the research framework devised by the librarian to simplify the process for their assignments. These capstone activities have begun to inform the capstone project that is being developed for all students of the high school. The library media specialist expressed a desire to have more opportunities to work with teachers to develop curriculum and integrate library services into their lessons. As a former classroom teacher, he has a wealth of knowledge and expertise that could be more consistently accessed by teachers in the building. In addition, he can be a valuable resource by helping teachers with their instructional practices and modeling effective use of instructional technology.

The library media specialist is responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning. This is evident by the use of the library blog to promote new book purchases, the video technology software that students use, and the numerous clubs that he oversees after school. The library media specialist informally conducts ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. He samples students and staff throughout the year both informally and formally. Follett Destiny reports were referenced as a source of data used to inform purchases as well as to solicit student and staff recommendations. Student interns are utilized to inform decision-making regarding book purchases. As a result of the effective library services, students and teachers have access to resources that support their learning. Additional integration of library

resources into teachers' lessons, would enhance the work being done by teachers in the classroom.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- facility tour
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 7

Conclusions

Mark T. Sheehan High School support services for identified students in special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners have an adequate number of certified personnel who inconsistently collaborate with teachers, counselors and support staff; consistently provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students, and consistently perform ongoing assessment using relevant data. The special education department has an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel with student caseloads ranging from 15-20 students. A review of student schedules in PowerSchool confirms that identified students are receiving a comprehensive education in the least restrictive environment. The special education department meets each month for an hour to review practices to ensure appropriate delivery of services. According to the 2012-2013 Strategic School Profile, Sheehan observes a 79 percent inclusion rate of special education students in mainstream classrooms. IEP teams meet yearly to conduct annual program reviews and to gauge student progress. Special education case managers monitor progress and provide support to students. Special education students are re-evaluated every three years to see if they continue to qualify for special education services. Data collected by special education teachers and classroom teachers, including PowerSchool grades, work samples, progress reports, and observations are used to develop and update IEPs and 504 plans, to determine accommodation for standardized testing such as SATs, and to inform ongoing programming and interventions on an individual basis.

During classroom visits, teacher interviews, and in leadership meetings there seemed to be a disconnection about the role of the special education teacher in the classroom setting and their involvement in modifying curriculum and assessments and differentiating instruction for special education students. Most special education teachers are a presence in the classroom, but do not participate in teaching of content, facilitation of discussions or small groups, or support students other than special education students. A meeting with the district special education department head supported the idea that the co-teaching model is not an expectation that exists between the classroom and special education teacher; however, the self-study contradicted this stance. A co-teaching model with common planning has been previously attempted, but it was only partially successful. Classroom teachers expressed frustration about the lack of involvement of special education staff during classes in which they are present to support special ed students. Some special educators were seen as resistant to get involved in modifying curriculum and assessments for identified students. As a result of the disconnect between regular and special education teachers, the school is struggling to deliver services in core classes in a collaborative manner.

The ELL population at Sheehan High School was growing at the time of the self-study and continues to grow with 16 identified students receiving services. Since the self-study the demand has been addressed by increasing the ELL teacher's time from one period per day to full time. Students are serviced together and there are adequate print resources available for both the teacher and students.

For those students who have educational needs that may not fall under the special education realm, other services are in place to ensure that their needs are being met through a 504 plan overseen by a school counselor. The school has also seen a demand in services necessary for 504 students in recent years with 10-17 students identified between the years of 2009-2011 to over 50 identified 504 students between 2012-2015. The need for greater support in managing the clerical aspects of 504 plans has recently been addressed. In the summer of 2015, the distribution of students among the counselors was reviewed and a plan was put in place to adjust/balance the caseloads beginning in the 2015 - 2016 school year. Although the new department head has a reduced caseload, adjustments were made that resulted in a more equitable balance both within the school and when compared to Sheehan's sister high school, Lyman Hall. When support services personnel effectively communicates with and supports regular education teachers in the classroom, students will benefit from a

cohesive model of curriculum support and delivery which will increase student achievement.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Commendations

Commendation

The array of timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students at the school

Commendation

The work of the Teacher Student Assistance Team that identifies struggling students and plans appropriate interventions

Commendation

The provision of two school psychologists and a part-time social worker which allows for targeted interventions for at-risk students

Commendation

The school counseling services which provide access to college and career planning for students and families and support for all students

Commendation

The exemplary school health services that provide training for staff, screenings for students, individual care for ongoing student health needs and referrals to outside health care providers when needed

Commendation

The consistent use of PowerSchool which provides students and families with timely information regarding student performance

Commendation

The provision of a college and career specialist who provides extensive outreach and opportunities for students

Commendation

The availability of after-school support from teachers and the provision of a late bus which provides many students access to co-curricular opportunities beyond the school day

Commendation

The effective and innovative library media specialist who provides a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum

Commendation

The additional staffing for ELL students to ensure their needs are met

Standard 6 Recommendations

Recommendation

Implement a health data management program to improve the efficiency of the nursing department in aggregating and analyzing student health information

Recommendation

Define the expectations and roles for special educators and classroom teachers in the regular education classroom

Recommendation

Ensure that special educators participate in differentiating instruction for special education students and modifying curriculum when necessary

Recommendation

Increase the amount of collaboration between teachers and the library media specialist regarding curriculum and instruction as well as modeling the use of instructional technology

Standard 7 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The community and the district's governing body consistently provides dependable funding for a wide range of school programs and services; ongoing professional development and curriculum revision; equipment, instructional materials and supplies; professional and support staff, and a full range of technology support. The district received a 2.88 percent increase in its education budget for the current school year which was larger than the average increases for the previous six years. Additionally, the superintendent of schools has collaborated with the mayor and removed major facility improvements from the operating budget and put them into a separate capital improvement plan. The town has provided \$9 million of town money to be directed toward building improvements. Finally, the superintendent has allocated the one percent fund budget excess toward technology and fully understands the necessity to continue these efforts.

According to the Endicott survey, 72 percent of students feel that their school offers a wide range of school programs and services, while 43 percent of staff feel that there is dependable funding for a wide range of programs and services. In interviews with department chairpersons, it was generally agreed that there is dependable funding for existing programs and services. According to the self-study, the district finds innovative ways to build assets and opportunities for students despite budget shortfall issues. These opportunities include the HUBCAP program, the CNA program, a food truck for the culinary program, and a newly hired college and career specialist. Likewise, interviews with staff revealed that there is dependable funding for professional development. The district has supported a variety of professional development opportunities for teachers in areas such as mastery-based learning, Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS), and models of excellence. In addition, grants help drive the district's mission while it struggles to fund an equitable, feasible budget. There is also a sabbatical program, funded by local businesses, that allows three teachers per year to take a one-year sabbatical to explore topics and generate curriculum in areas related to the innovation goals of the district. In general, staff feel that there is dependable funding for equipment, materials, and supplies, but indicated that updated supplies and materials in some areas, while not absolutely necessary, would improve curriculum delivery. In terms of staffing, while the Endicott survey indicates that only 18 percent of students feel that more teachers are needed in the school, the self-study and teacher interviews revealed that recent cuts in faculty have impacted class size in core classes in a detrimental way.

The Wallingford Public Schools have made technology a priority throughout the district and at Sheehan High School. The district technology plan indicates a sustained budget for technology over a period of five years with allocations for maintenance on wireless access systems, server improvements, updates to software, hardware purchases and an increase in technology support staff. While the school board members, superintendent, and IT director indicated that funding for technology is adequate, with an ongoing five-year strategic plan to supply or replace equipment, all staff members interviewed indicated a significant need in this area that impedes their ability to accomplish 21st century learning goals. According to the self-study, there are 42 desktop computers in the library media center, 60 Chromebooks available for students to check out and use, two available computer labs for classroom teachers, and Chromebook carts. In an update since the self-study, currently there are now 383 Chromebooks in the school. From teacher interviews, it is apparent that Chromebook carts are not generally shared amongst teachers, but that certain teachers have Chromebook carts either because of curricular needs or because they advocated for them. In general, the resounding sentiment amongst the faculty is that more computers are needed. In addition, the IT support staff for the district is comprised of eight members, two positions of which are new this year. The IT director indicated that she could use one more technician if the budget allowed. In terms of professional development for instructional technology, the director indicated that her department will run professional development for technology that is new, such as the Google Mail system the district instituted this year. Much of the other technology professional development seems to be teacher-led.

Because the district's governing body provides dependable funding for a wide range of school programs and services; ongoing professional development and curriculum revision; equipment, and instructional materials and supplies; professional and support staff; and has a plan to continue to grow its support for technology, on the whole, students and teachers have the educational resources to meet their learning and teaching needs.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school board
- department leaders
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 2

Conclusions

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, but it inconsistently keeps the school clean on a daily basis. Working in conjunction with district personnel, Mark T. Sheehan High School plans and funds needed maintenance and repair of school facilities and equipment. However, there is evidence to support that the school is not funded adequately enough to address all of the maintenance and repair issues that would be considered vital in a building that is almost 45 years old. From information obtained on the site tour, it is clear that the school has prioritized projects based on need and compliance. For example, the school received a new roof in 2012 and installed ADA compliant bathrooms near the turf field. The natatorium is well-maintained, with detailed chemical testing logs and clean facilities. In addition, all of the air handlers in the building have now been updated to address HVAC issues. The maintenance department also reported that they conduct regular air quality testing in the building. However, many staff members report that they consider ventilation in the building to be a serious issue, and it was reported by staff that there are significant temperature fluctuations throughout the building year round. For example, one classroom could be very cold, while the next classroom could be much too warm. Other requests, such as an refurbishment of the main office space and a re-modeling of the school bathrooms have gone unresolved.

The building appeared to be clean and well-maintained. However, in interviews, all parties indicated that there are issues with daily cleaning services. The assistant principal and head of maintenance expressed that there is a dissatisfaction with the company that is contracted to clean the school, specifically because of the lack of supervision on the part of the company that assigns the cleaners and the inability of the school to do anything about it. The district contracts out its cleaning services and awards the contract through a bid process. The school itself employs two full-time custodians during the day and one in the evening. The contracted company assigns one cleaner during the day and four at night. In interviews with staff, there were reports of inconsistency and/or neglect of certain areas of the building, and some staff reported that they obtained and submitted photo evidence to prove that areas of the school were not clean. All staff members interviewed agreed that the cleaning job done in the evening hours is inadequate. In the Endicott survey, only 40 percent of staff interviewed agree that the school is clean and well-maintained.

The school uses the *Tools for Schools* program for cataloging, reporting, and addressing building issues. This is an extensive document that lists maintenance issues in each area and room in the building. When the assistant principal and head of maintenance were asked about the effectiveness of the system, both indicated that the issues presented in the report were addressed in a consistent and timely manner. However, staff members indicated in interviews that from their perspective, many of the issues in the report go unaddressed. While there is a system in place that allows teachers and other staff to report concerns and this information is tracked and logged, there is a discrepancy between the opinions of those in charge of facilities and the staff who occupy the spaces. Those in charge of facilities believe that issues are addressed in an adequate manner; conversely, staff feels that significant issues, such as the repair or replacement of items that incur a significant expense, can go unaddressed for years. In the Endicott survey, approximately 82 percent of staff surveyed are undecided or disagree that repairs in the building are conducted in a timely manner.

Staff interviews indicated that, in general, maintenance and replacement of equipment is satisfactory. For example, if a staff member's computer needs attention, the IT department is timely when addressing it. However, if computers designated for student use are in need of tech support, it might take longer for those fixes to occur. In addition, department chairpersons' commented that much of the equipment in the weight room has been donated through booster money, and while the entire school has the benefit of using the facility, they are concerned that funding to repair or replace the equipment may not be available when needed. The principal

noted that this funding has not yet been requested, and both the physical education department and athletic department can request funding or use their allocated funds to address this area. There is also concern that there will not be funding to replace the turf field on schedule. Many stakeholders interviewed indicated that members of the school community actively and successfully seek out grants to compensate for deficiencies in the school budget. Many programs are funded through grants, and there are many active booster organizations that raise money to offset the impact of underfunding. When the school consistently develops, plans, and funds programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant, to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment, and to keep the school clean on a daily basis, students and faculty will be assured that the facility supports their efforts to achieve 21st century learning goals.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The community funds and the school implements a long-range plan that partially addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements. There is a five-year district strategic plan that addresses beliefs, mission, vision and goals, community outreach, curriculum and instruction, district climate, facilities, and technology. Steering committees meet several times during the school year to review, revise, and update each section of the strategic plan. The strategic plan for each of these areas becomes the overarching conceptual guide for building-level activities and departmental activities within those specific areas. The district effectively develops long-term plans in its approach to a three-year budget planning cycle and five-year strategic plan. These two initiatives demonstrate that the district is forward-thinking in terms of programs and services, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements. The district also employs a five-year strategic plan that addresses technological needs. The district is concluding year five of the current plan and is currently working on the next five-year plan. While a scaffolded approach to adding to the current inventory and replacing outdated machines is in place, the Board of Education is hesitant to move to a 1:1 learning environment for students without a demonstrated need and a thoughtful approach to this transition.

Student enrollment and course requests determine which courses will be offered in the upcoming academic year, which impacts staffing. Courses with low enrollment rates are dropped from the schedule. Department chairpersons make recommendations for the number of sections per course based on student request. There are no district guidelines for high school class size, although room constraints (i.e., courses such as technology education and family consumer science) and resources (number of computers in the room) may influence class size. In the self-study, it was stated that at the end of the 2010 school year, Sheehan High School lost 6.8 percent of its certified staff (6 out of 88) due to budget cuts. In conversations with staff, the impact of these cuts has been felt, especially in core classes where the new Common Core Standards present rigorous challenges to students and staff. However, some positions have been added, such as a college and career specialist. In an interview the superintendent reported that overall class size has not been impacted by cuts in faculty, and the BOE feels that class sizes are adequate.

Budget constraints have also made it difficult to keep up with general facility needs. For example, the head of maintenance identified a plan that has been in the works for years to rekey all doors in the building to operate with one master key, but he is still carrying numerous keys in order to gain access to various areas of the building. *Tools for Schools*, a program developed by the Environmental Protection Agency, is a program used to collect data to assess the environmental needs in the building. The program is comprised of two parts - first, a survey is given to every member of the building with multiple choice questions about the quality and condition of the learning environment. Second, there are room by room inspections conducted by a group of administrators and faculty that spend a full day inspecting and checking the conditions of each room. The data from both parts is collected and areas to address are identified and given to building custodians or district maintenance supervisors. While the issues raised in the *Tools for Schools* instrument are taken into consideration, they must be prioritized and tackled based on critical need and funding. Staff interviews indicated that very few of these issues are addressed. However, the assistant principal and head of custodial services have indicated that they respond to the items that are deemed a priority in a timely manner. While major facility improvements have been moved to the town budget, smaller maintenance items such as these do impact staff morale and the learning community.

Building-level administration works with district staff and facility staff to identify capital improvement needs and to ensure that projects successfully address them. For example, in 2007, the principal identified the need for a new roof, and a new roof was installed in 2012. The turf field is due for replacement and there is a plan to accomplish this replacement in the 2017 - 2018 school year. However, because of the age of the building, there is concern

that more large-scale issues will arise without sufficient long-term plans to address them. The school seems to adequately address issues that concern federal, state, and local codes, but the impression is that the limited funds available for capital improvement are exhausted for this cause, forcing the school to leave less critical but necessary issues unaddressed. Because the school funds and implements a long range plan that includes programs and services, facility needs, technology and capital improvements, school personnel can be assured that the district allocates available resources in a strategic way to meet its needs.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Faculty and building administrators are highly involved in the development and implementation of the budget. The budget process is a fluid, ongoing process that occurs over the course of all twelve calendar months. In mid-October, the superintendent provides the principal with the budget allocation for the next school year. Once the budget allocations are received, the information is shared with the staff. Specific faculty members (i.e., department chairpersons, assistant principals, directors, library media specialist, and planetarium teacher) submit budget proposals for their respective departments. The principal develops the school's budget based on the submitted proposals and presents the budget along with special proposals to the superintendent in November. The superintendent then reviews all budget requests from all schools and compiles all information into both a sustained services and strategic plan budget. The superintendent, along with the business manager, presents both budgets to the Board of Education at an annual meeting in mid-January. At the Board of Education level, there are several public meetings held in which line-item discussions occur regarding both the sustained services and strategic plan budgets. Once the budget is finalized by a vote by the Board in February, it is sent to the office of the mayor for his review. The mayor is then tasked with developing the overall town budget and then makes his recommendation and presentation to the town council on April 1st. Throughout April and May, various presentations and hearings are held in which administrators and citizens can speak on budgetary issues and concerns during public comment. In May, the town council finalizes its budget and sends the official number to each town department, including the Board of Education.

All stakeholders have input into the line items of the budget. In addition the superintendent has initiated a three-year budget plan which reflects a forward-thinking approach to the budget. By projecting three years in advance, the superintendent can make strategic decisions about additions to the budget over a three-year period to support specific initiatives and ensure a consistent approach to programming and staffing. All stakeholders interviewed indicated that they feel they are an important and valued part of the budget process. The superintendent indicated that when there is a demonstrated need by a school, there is an addition to the budget. School administrators agreed that the superintendent is supportive of their budget requests as much as possible and that the money in the district is distributed fairly based on strategic priorities. Because the budget process operates in an transparent and inclusive manner, administrators and teachers understand the budgetary decisions being made and can use the allocated resources to meet their needs.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- central office personnel
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 5

Conclusions

The school site and plant adequately supports the delivery of high quality school programs and services in most but not all areas. The school is well provisioned with appropriate classroom, office, and large group spaces. Technology in the building has increased tremendously since 2010. The school has a library media center that is equipped with 42 desktop computers and 60 Chromebooks. The building also has a total of four computer labs and two of them are available for use by all classroom teachers. There are many classrooms that have liquid-crystal display (LCD) projectors, and there are eleven classrooms equipped with SMARTBoards (interactive whiteboards). All classrooms (except the woodshop) have projection capability through ceiling mounted LCD projectors, LCD TVs, SMARTBoards, or LightRaise interactive projectors. The school has a fully functional planetarium that was updated in September 2014. There are three art rooms, one of which is designed for a photography class and equipped with a dark room. The school has two cafeterias, an adequate gymnasium with attached locker rooms, and an auditorium, all of which continue to support various programs. The school also has the benefit of a natatorium with attached locker rooms, a weight room, and a fitness room. The campus also has tennis courts, a baseball field, softball field, an all-purpose turf field and all weather track for football, soccer, lacrosse and field hockey, and two grass practice fields. There is also an athletic trainer's office, which is available after school hours to support student athletes. The nurse's office is equipped with three beds, two private bathrooms, and sufficient storage.

According to the Endicott survey, over 73 percent of students agree or strongly agree that the school site supports school programs and services, while only around 50 percent of staff agree or strongly agree. Evidence from the site visit and interviews with administration and staff indicated that while adequate, some aspects of the 45-year-old building are not consistent with a 21st century learning environment. The administrative office space needs renovating to provide a welcoming environment free of congestion. Technology, including computer labs and Chromebook carts, needs to be maintained and refreshed as necessary in order to ensure that staff have a reliable source of technology so that students are attaining 21st century skills. The kitchen and cafeterias need to be remodeled in order to provide improved food service and a better atmosphere for students. The bathrooms, particularly in the auditorium area, need renovating because these are the facilities the public uses when attending events. The turf field, a significant investment by the district, is nearing its serviceable life and needs to be replaced as per the manufacturer's timeline to avoid safety concerns. Lighting in the parking lot areas needs to be added for security reasons. Finally, the band instrument lockers are in very poor condition, and some of the lockers are unusable. As indicated by the superintendent, the school site and physical plant is constantly in use for events in the afternoons, evenings, and weekends, so attention to these issues is particularly important, especially in light of the fact that the building is almost 45 years old. Each year, the building principal creates a three year plan which includes maintenance items and renovation projects to be addressed. The principal meets with the District Maintenance Supervisor to go over the plan and some of the requests get placed on the long term district plan. Many of these items do not get addressed, however, with some that have been on the district list for as long as ten years. Although much of the school site and plant adequately supports the high quality school programs, several areas of the school need attention and updating in order for the facility to support the achievement of the 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing

- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 6

Conclusions

The school regularly maintains up-to-date documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all of the applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations. The school also keeps up-to-date and detailed records of pool maintenance. The school has also installed ADA compliant restrooms and ramps for the turf field. When asked to produce documentation on things such as AED monitor checks, work order summaries, and emergency and exit light inspection sheets, the head of custodial services was able to comply immediately and everything was found to be up to date. Upon random inspection the fire extinguishers in the building were up-to-date on inspection, and the head of custodial services indicated that he inspects them monthly. In addition, the manufacturer comes to inspect them annually.

The school uses *Tools for Schools* to document issues throughout the building. Issues that are identified by this document are entered into SchoolDude. In the event that a work order cannot be completed, it is then considered for placement in the strategic plan. Upon inspection of a work order summary list, it appears that most concerns are addressed in a timely manner. If the problem cannot be addressed by personnel in the building, there are notes that it was referred to an outside agency. Material Safety Data Sheets are located in the nurse's office and clearly outline how to treat chemical accidents and how to properly store chemicals and other hazardous substances. Annually, all staff complete blood-borne pathogen training. The facilities manager noted that regular air quality tests are conducted (reports were located at central office), however, many staff members have concerns about air quality, poor ventilation, odors, and climate control.

The school has adequate security measures in place to protect students and staff in the event of a fire or other emergency. A crisis emergency response plan is in place that addresses all possible circumstances, such as fire, adverse weather conditions, bus accidents, and intruders. Safety drills are conducted twice a month. At times, these drills are observed by local police or fire personnel to provide feedback to the school. In addition, the school has a safety and security committee that meets throughout the year. Beginning in December 2012, procedures were implemented to enhance building security. All visitors are required to show photo identification to gain entrance to the building, and visitors must sign in upon entering the building. Cameras and card access control systems are in place at the main entrances to the school. Because the school regularly maintains up-to-date documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet the applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations, students and teachers have a safe environment in which to work.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 7

Conclusions

All professional staff at Mark T. Sheehan High school strive to engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with school. Initiatives the school employs to engage parents include an open house in the fall, sports awards nights at the end of each season, tech night, parent conferences held three times a year, two Capstone presentation nights, a "Meet and Greet" for parents and students to come in prior to the beginning of the school year, the eighth grade orientation program, and the ninth grade parents meeting. PPT and TSA meetings take place regularly to ensure that at-risk students are identified and services are provided. The self-study indicates that all of these events are well-attended by families. Parents are able to participate in monthly board meetings during which policies and educational standards are discussed, and an LCD screen in senior court notifies students about upcoming events or changes in schedule.

There are various forms of communication that the school uses to communicate with parents. Parents are invited to participate by joining parent organizations such as PTAC. The school's website features the Parent Portal and Virtual Backpack and contains abundant and updated information regarding events, information, curriculum, and initiatives. One assistant superintendent, who is also a Sheehan parent, indicated that the school frequently and inclusively outreaches parents to increase participation in various activities and organizations the school offers. The principal also sends out a monthly newsletter in order to keep parents informed of upcoming events and changes to the school's policies. On a staff level, there is abundant evidence to support parent and family involvement. Many teachers have individual websites on which they post upcoming assignments, projects, and any resources available. Many teachers also use Twitter, Remind, and Google Classroom to communicate with students and parents. The staff is able to use PowerSchool to communicate with parents about grades. One teacher reported that as part of her parent engagement goal for her teacher evaluation plan, she regularly emails a certain number of parents a week regarding positive things that are happening in the classroom in regards to their children. Evidence of parental involvement is apparent in very active booster organizations for various activities. The superintendent indicated that "the building never sleeps" and that various evening parent workshops take place in the school. In addition, parental involvement is encouraged through the use of annual climate surveys. Overall, the Endicott survey indicates that 68 percent of professional staff actively engages parents and families as partners in their children's education. As a result of their actions, professional staff have active communication to be vital partners in the educational process of students so that every student makes progress toward achieving the 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 8

Conclusions

The school extensively develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning. According to the self-study, the school currently offers several opportunities for students to be immersed in a higher education learning experience while still enrolled in high school through Gateway and Middlesex Community Colleges at no cost. Students can also take advantage of the seven ECE courses through UConn for college credit. Partnerships with local businesses and organizations are numerous and include the Business Think Tank which discusses ways that the business community can help to support student learning. Local businesses also support the Innovation Team, which is the sabbatical program for teachers who then take their learning and contribute to the goals of the strategic plan. In addition, HUBCAP, a hybrid-business incubator, provides a unique opportunity for collaboration between businesses and the local school district to provide an authentic learning experience while strengthening the business foundation and expanding downtown Wallingford business. The school also has a strong connection with the Spanish community of Wallingford, which helps Spanish-speaking parents communicate more effectively with the school. Sheehan participates in the Sikorsky STEM Challenge, which is funded by Sikorsky and Connecticut Innovations and many local businesses donate equipment to the schools. For example, the local theater donated its seats to one of the school district's aging auditoriums after it underwent a renovation. The school is also receiving a donation of hospital beds for the CNA program that will be housed in the school.

The Wallingford Capstone Experience, an initiative that is a graduation requirement for students beginning with the class of 2020, will provide an opportunity for every student to cultivate a community connection through job shadowing, a mentoring experience, an internship, or community service. In addition, all Sheehan students are required to complete 30 hours of community service prior to graduation. The school recently added a full-time college and career specialist who helps students form relationships with the community and helps them explore and prepare for their future careers. The college and career specialist brings post-secondary representatives from colleges, proprietary schools, and businesses, something that was previously handled by the counseling department, into the schools to meet with students and provide information about choices after high school. Local businesses and organizations participate in panel presentations for students. The college and career specialist is also responsible for maintaining a partnership with the Quinnipiac/North Haven Chamber of Commerce, parents, and alumni in a career connection program so that students benefit from mentoring, job shadowing, and internships. Examples of programs run by the specialist include Law Day, during which local attorneys, judges, police, and courtroom clerks are in attendance for a panel presentation. Additionally, the specialist brings in Wallingford manufacturing companies to discuss what they do and arranges internship and job shadowing for students. As a result of the extensive support and partnerships with parents, the community, businesses, and higher education cultivated by Sheehan High School, students have the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in authentic ways beyond the walls of the school.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers

- parents
- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Commendations

Commendation

The dependable funding from the district's governing body for a wide range of programs and services

Commendation

The recent improvements to the physical plant including the replacement of the school roof, the updates to the planetarium, and the addition of ADA compliant bathrooms near the turf field

Commendation

The system for documenting and tracking maintenance and repair issues that ensures building needs are addressed

Commendation

The creation of the district's five-year strategic plan to address capital, technology, and instructional needs

Commendation

The CNA program that provides hands-on, authentic experiences for students

Commendation

The multitude of community partnerships that serve both the school and the school community

Commendation

The hiring of a full-time college and career specialist which allows students consistent help to access college and career opportunities

Commendation

The wide range of professional development opportunities for teachers

Commendation

The efforts to ensure the safety of the school and its students including the practice of bi-monthly drills

Standard 7 Recommendations

Recommendation

Increase accountability measures to ensure that the school is clean on a daily basis

Recommendation

Report on the implementation of the plan to address the following facilities concerns:

- Replacement of the turf field
- Renovation of the bathroom facilities
- Increased lighting in the parking lot areas
- Additional storage space in the auditorium
- Replacement of the band instrument lockers
- Refurbishment of the main office

Recommendation

Complete work orders on small items in a timely fashion and develop and implement a procedure for communicating the status of these orders to the staff

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 this school. The faculty, school board, and superintendent should be apprised by the building administration yearly of progress made addressing visiting committee recommendations.

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

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

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

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

The visiting committee would like to express thanks to the community for the hospitality and welcome. The school community completed an exemplary self-study that clearly identified the school's strengths and areas of need. The time and effort dedicated to the self-study and preparation for the visit ensured a successful accreditation visit.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES Commission on Public Secondary Schools

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

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

Roster of Team Members

Chair

Alyson Geary - New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.

Assistant Chair

Mark Friese - Stonington High School

Visiting Committee Members

Cyndy Alkire - Coventry High School

Kara Barrett - Enrico Fermi High School

Mr. William Burkhead - Monomoy Regional High School

Norma Caiazza - North Kingstown High School

Erin Clark - Enfield High School

Tiffany Cozzolino - Stonington High School

Colm Duffin - New Britain High School

Wendy Durand - Killingly High School

Jessica Gillespie - Griswold High School

Mark Jewett - Brookfield High School

Patricia Kilsey - Lincoln High School

Andrew Masters - East Windsor High School

Barbara Morris - Torrington High School

Kristi Ramsey - Torrington High School