

New England Association of Schools and Colleges



Commission on Public Secondary Schools

Report of the Visiting Committee for Norwood Senior High School

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**Stephen E. Mitchell, Chair
Paul Mangelinkx, Assistant Chair
George Usevich, Principal**

New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.
209 Burlington Road, Bedford, MA 01730-1433

TEL 781.271.0022
FAX 781.271.0950

www.neasc.org

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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, located in Bedford, Massachusetts, considers this visiting committee report of Norwood Senior High School 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 Norwood Senior High 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 team.

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 six Commissions: the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE), the Commission on Independent Schools (CIS), the Commission on Public Secondary Schools (CPSS), the Commission on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI), the Commission on Public Elementary and Middle Schools (CPEMS), and the Commission on American and International Schools Abroad (CAISA).

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

- Teaching and Learning Standards
 - Mission and Expectations for Student Learning
 - Curriculum
 - Instruction
 - Assessment of Student Learning

Support of Teaching and Learning Standards
Leadership and Organization
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 Commission'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 Commission in the Follow-Up process. Continued accreditation requires that the school be reevaluated at least once every ten years and that it shows continued progress addressing identified needs.

Preparation for the Evaluation Visit - The School Self-Study

A steering committee of professional staff members was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Norwood Senior High School, a committee of sixteen members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people.

The self-study of Norwood Senior High School extended over a period of sixteen school months from January 2008 to June 2009. The visiting committee was pleased to note that students, parents, and community members joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

Public schools evaluated by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their adherence to the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the school's mission, learning expectations, and unique student population. In addition to using the Self-Study Guides developed by a representative group of New England educators and approved by the Commission, Norwood Senior High School also used questionnaires developed by The Global Institute 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 sixteen evaluators that included classroom teachers, principals and assistant principals, and central administrators was assigned by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate the high school. The Committee members spent four days in Norwood, 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 Commission's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented public schools and central office administrators, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Norwood Senior High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 30 hours shadowing 16 students for a half-day
- a total of 26 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 30 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 team 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 team's judgment will be helpful to the school as it works to improve teaching and learning and to better meet Commission Standards.

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

Overview of Findings

Although the conclusions of the visiting committee on the school's adherence to the Commission's Standards for Accreditation appear in various sections of this report, the committee wishes to highlight some findings in the paragraphs that follow. These findings are not intended to be a summary of the report.

The adults who inhabit this facility and the positive rapport and mutual respect there is among administrators, faculty, staff, and students make this a distinguished educational community. The positive components of dedication, commitment, and pursuit of excellence drive the culture of Norwood Senior High School and set this educational institution apart from so many other high schools throughout the state.

Norwood Senior High School has employed the self-study process as a means of examining the programs and services it provides for Norwood students as well as its fundamental beliefs about teaching and learning. The visiting committee found that many of the school's strengths and needs delineated in the self-study are evident in the school and that the commendations and recommendations found in this report will form the basis for continuous improvement in programs, services, and the new high school facilities provided in the future. Norwood Senior High School is dedicated to continuous growth and improvement as evidenced by the efforts the community has made in the self-evaluation process and in the dedication of the faculty and parents to provide a rich learning environment for students.

The visiting committee commends the professional staff and administration of the Norwood Senior High School for creating a safe and nurturing environment and clear expectations for student behavior. Students take pride in their school and expressed to the visiting committee how comfortable they feel with their teachers and their peers. They understand and appreciate that the faculty and staff are committed to ensuring their well-being and success in meeting the expectations in the mission statement. The school celebrates student achievement and enjoys the support and appreciation of the school committee and the greater Norwood community. The administration and faculty have involved parents and members of the community in projects and programs that foster learning and connection to the school itself. Parents express their satisfaction with the programs and services Norwood Senior High School provides and appreciate both the leadership and the open communication of the school administration.

Teaching and Learning at Norwood Senior High School

Norwood Senior High School faces the challenges of providing students with a comprehensive program of studies and many supportive services. The school is undergoing major construction of a new high school facility that will provide for student needs and reflect the ideas and goals expressed in the mission statement. The faculty, administration, and school committee members have searched for creative ways to provide for the needs of all students while demonstrating fiscal responsibility to the town. Parents and community members have contributed to these efforts in many ways and on

many occasions. NSHS is commended for the ability of members of the staff to articulate the values and expectations expressed in the mission statement. There is a commitment of the school community towards the development and sustainment of the Four A's of the mission statement (academics, arts, athletics, and activities). Because of the efforts of the faculty, staff, and students' families, there is a warm, supportive climate for learning at Norwood Senior High School. Students are encouraged to develop and sustain the Four A's, and the school is continuing to provide opportunities for students to take courses at the highest level available. The mission is prominently displayed throughout the high school although the expectations for student learning are not. Students are not as clear about how the expectations for student learning relate to the goals and objectives for their individual courses, and some work will need to be done to clarify the connections and to post exemplars of student work in each classroom for students to refer when evaluating their own work employing the school-wide rubrics that will help students understand how they are assessed. These rubrics should be employed across the school and connected to daily lesson plans and assessments in all classes. The data derived from these classroom assessments should assist in both the curriculum review process and improvement of instruction. The school also needs to determine how individual student performance of the social and civic expectations will be tracked.

The Norwood Senior High School program of studies is varied and comprehensive. The faculty has worked diligently to provide an array of courses that will prepare students for life after high school. Time and resources should be allocated so that teachers who teach the same course have time to collaborate to ensure that all students enrolled in various sections of the same course achieve the same goals and so that faculty members may develop stronger connections between curriculum objectives and academic expectations across all departments, develop strategies to ensure an equally high degree of expectations and rigor in all courses, and develop methods to incorporate data derived from classroom assessments in the curriculum review process. The schedule provides for longer instructional periods and is seen as a benefit for many elective courses, but not all teachers are employing varied instructional approaches during the extended periods, and staff development activities should be provided to assist them in teaching in the block.

Support for Teaching and Learning at Norwood Senior High School

Norwood Senior High School is a special place. The principal is the popular and well-respected instructional leader of NSHS. The principal and other administrative leaders at NSHS are passionate and dedicated keepers of the school vision and mission, and it is clear that they have the trust of the teachers and support staff. There is a symbiosis that exists between the leadership and staff at NSHS. As the leadership team tirelessly supports the work being done in the building, teachers and support staff members buoy the greatest aspirations of the principal as he endeavors to carry out a vision of student excellence and academic achievement.

With the support of the entire school community, the leadership team at NSHS has provided for students a safe and nurturing environment. It is a place where students feel connected to their teachers and administrators as well as each other. In this

supportive environment, through an emphasis on core content areas, students are challenged to become more responsible for themselves and for each other, to become college-ready and career-ready young men and women.

The student support services are consistent with the school's mission and expectations. As a result of the recent economic downturn, there has been some adjustment to the allocation of resources, programs, and services. Evaluation of programs and personnel in the support services department is inconsistent, and there has not been a recent program review of these services. A number of teachers does not use the library media center on a regular basis to support teaching and learning, so that a valuable resource is currently underutilized. Staff development programs that assist teachers in using the library media center and a strong ongoing orientation program for students should be continued to increase the use of the library media center.

Although the school committee has been highly supportive of school initiatives and student needs, budget constraints have caused the committee and the administration to make difficult decisions about how to allocate resources equitably and effectively. Parents have accepted activity fees and the need for fund-raising in order to keep the quality of programs and activities in place. As enrollment grows, however, the budgetary constraints will need to be addressed on a larger more public scale in order to meet student needs.

Norwood Senior High School should be proud of the many aspects of the school that are commended in this report. It should continue to provide those programs and services while continuing to refine and improve them. It has the capacity to address the recommendations presented in this report. However, to fully meet the needs of the existing program at NSHS and as it seeks to expand its educational offerings to a wider band of students, the school will require immediate attention to the development a short-term transition plan to effectively move ahead as a 21st Century high school.

With strong leadership, the spirit of cooperation, and the support of the community, the school should achieve its mission and ensure that every student is well able to attain the expectations for student learning. Some programs and approaches need refinement, and the faculty needs to examine whether or not every student is being challenged with the most rigorous program, regardless of his or her ability. However, the foundation and the will are highly evident in the school. The pride the community takes in Norwood Senior High School should serve it well as it continues to move forward guided by its mission.

School and Community Profile

The Community

The Town of Norwood is a residential suburban community located 14 miles southwest of Boston and 30 miles northeast of Providence. With a total area of 10.55 square miles and a population of 28,587, Norwood is bordered by Canton, Walpole, Westwood, and Sharon. Transportation includes MBTA bus service to Forest Hills (Orange Line) and commuter rail service with 3 station stops in Norwood. The town's proximity to Route 1, Route 1A, and Interstate 95 allows for easy access to many of the high tech and biotech companies on the outskirts of Boston. Additionally, the town has its own airport, Norwood Memorial Airport, with access to Boston, Worcester, and Providence.

Norwood continues to have one of the lowest tax rates in the area. The residential tax rate is \$8.13 per \$1000 while the commercial tax rate is \$16.14 per \$1000. The mean income is \$52,982, and most jobs in town are geared toward trade and service. Over half of the trade jobs are low paying retail positions. Service jobs account for 60% of the jobs in town. The largest employers in town are Caritas Norwood Hospital, Analog Devices, Boch Enterprises, UPS, and FM Global. Low income students make up 21.6% of the district and 12.9% of Norwood students do not have English as a primary language.

In April, 2006 the town of Norwood passed its first Proposition 2 1/2 override. This was for debt exclusion in the amount of 6 million dollars to support the *study and design* phase for a possible new High School. As of March 2008, projected expenses exceed revenues. There has been moderate growth in new jobs in recent years. A significant increase in Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, and other service jobs has occurred, but there has been a decrease in manufacturing jobs. Those manufacturing jobs that remain are relatively high paying since they are in the field of electronics. The unemployment level for 2007 was 4.3%, and 19.9% of families live below the poverty level.

The school district has a population of 3,490. The student population at Norwood Senior High School is 1,077, with 91.5% of the students speaking English as their first language. Other languages represented are Arabic (2.7%), Spanish (1.2%), Portuguese (.93%), Italian (.56%), Creole and Luganda (.37% each), Albanian and Vietnamese (.28% each), Chinese, Greek, Gujarati, Korean, Philippine, Russian, and Tamil (.19%), Hindi, Ibo, Kriol, Polish, and Serbo-Croatian (.09% each). District Chapter 1 participation is 10.3%.

The 2006 per pupil expenditure for Norwood was \$11,027, and in 2007 the expenditure was \$12,052. In FY 2006, the state average per pupil expenditure was \$11,210. The percent of school funding obtained from the following sources for the past two years is:

| | 2006 | 2007 |
|-------------------|-------|-------|
| Local Resources | 73.3% | 79.2% |
| State Resources | 18.2% | 12% |
| Federal Resources | 3.3% | 3.2% |
| Other Resources | 5.2% | 5.6% |

The percentage of local property tax allocated to schools was 57.4% in 2006 and 55.9% in 2007.

There are two nonpublic elementary schools (K-8) in Norwood. St. Catherine of Siena School has 533 students enrolled, 231 of which are Norwood residents. The Solomon-Schechter Day School has 216 students enrolled with 4 Norwood residents attending. There are six public elementary schools with a total enrollment of 1,596 students. The Willett Early Childhood Center (Pre-K & Kindergarten) houses 370 students. The 5 elementary schools for grades 1-5 with their enrollments are the Balch (252), Callahan (205), Cleveland (299), Oldham (244), and Prescott (226). Norwood has one public middle school, Coakley Middle School, which has a total enrollment of 810 students. All enrolled students are Norwood residents.

The School and Students

The attached school profile provides information on the school and students in the areas of offerings and performance.

Norwood Senior High School is a grade 9-12 school with 1,077 students presently enrolled -576 females and 501 males. The school population has remained stable over the past ten years, and projected enrollments pose no major increases or decreases. There are no age-grade distribution issues presently at Norwood Senior High School.

Norwood Senior High School's graduation rate has been 98% for both the class of 2006 and 2007. The percent of students participating in the SAT's or ACT's for 2005-2006 was 77% (compared to the state average of 80%), and for 2006-2007 it was 88% (compared to the state average of 85%). Norwood Senior High School doesn't track graduates' performance in college.

The number of students not promoted in June 2006 was 18, and in June 2007 it was 23. For the last 2 school years one student has been expelled. Norwood Senior High School does not have an in-house suspension policy. Out- of-school suspensions for 2005-2006 totaled 117 students, and for 2006-2007 it was 108 students.

The number of failing grades issued in 2005-2006 for male students was 276, and for female students it was 132. The number of failing grades issued in 2006-2007 for male students was 282, and for female students it was 180. It is important to note that these numbers represent counting the same students multiple times should they receive more than one failing grade.

The average daily attendance rate for students during the 2005-2006 school year was 92.3%, and for the 2006-2007 school year it was 94%. The average daily teacher attendance rates at Norwood Senior High School have remained high and consistent. During the 2005-2006 school year it was 97%, and for the 2006-2007 school year it was 96%.

Norwood is a community with many diverse ethnic groups. The demographics of the high school have changed significantly since the 1997 report when there were 93 minority students representing 9.8% of the school population. Today there are 156 minority students representing 14.8% of the school population.

Norwood Senior High School's population of 1,077 students has white students comprising 85.2% of the population and minorities comprising 14.8% of the population. The breakdown by ethnicity is: African American- 7.6%, Asian- 2.5%, Hispanic- 4.0%, Native American-0.0%, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander- 0.0%, Multi-Race/Non-Hispanic-0.7%.

Housing in Norwood includes single-family homes, two and three family homes, and rental complexes. Windsor Gardens, Olde Derby Village, Norwest Woods, and Norwood Gardens are among the larger rental complexes. Due to numerous rental properties, the schools are affected by numerous students entering and withdrawing from school during the school year. For the academic year 2007-2008, Norwood Senior High School registered approximately 55 new students while 44 students withdrew. This impacts the school environment regarding class size, material distribution and loss, teaching and learning, guidance counseling, and documentation. Students, whose parents are transferred to the area for work, move in and out of the system regularly. Many of these complexes are also offering low-income rentals, which are attracting new families to town as well. Over the course of ten years, the town has also seen an influx of various immigrant populations.

Norwood Senior High School's dropout percentage has remained consistent over the past two years and is also similar to the state average. For the 2005-2006 school year there was a 3.4% dropout rate (compared to the state average of 3.3%), and for 2006-2007 it was 3.6%.

Parent/student/teacher conversations pertaining to the academic progress of students are not tracked formally.

The average class size school-wide is 20. Average class size can vary in the content areas. The following represents the average class size for specific content areas at Norwood Senior High School: English-18, Math -20, Social Studies-23, Foreign Language-20, Science-21, CAD-14, Health-22, Physical Education-21, Art-19, Music-24 and Drama-15. Classes can have varying rates due to levels, scheduling, elective offerings, and graduation requirements.

Norwood Senior High School has diverse offerings of co-curricular activities which support the school's belief in the four A's-Academics, Athletics, Activities, and the Arts. These include 26 clubs and 51 athletic teams which represent varsity, junior varsity, and freshman team offerings. Participation rates in these activities have remained steady and strong. For the 2006-2007 school year after-school activities had 827 students participating and athletics had 938. These figures represent the fact that some students participate in multiple activities and sports. Norwood Senior High School is proud of its wide-range of offerings of both activities and athletics.

Presently there are no collegiate institutions, vocational /technical schools, adult education institutions, or E-learning programs available to students at Norwood Senior High School. Funding for a dual enrollment program through the state colleges and universities was dropped. Blue Hills Regional Technical High School in Canton offers vocational and technical programs that are available to Norwood students. Norwood students may also enroll in the Norfolk County Agricultural School in Walpole. There is funding (\$12,000) in the FY09 budget for a program called "Virtual High School." This is an on-line program for students to take electives, subject to funding.

Schools to Career is a partnership with other area high schools. Teachers from surrounding towns meet with the coordinator of the program monthly in order to discuss field trips that can raise students' awareness of different career paths. *Schools to Career* also offers externships for teachers as well as summer programs for students.

The *LEAD (Live, Engage, Achieve, Develop) Program* is a post-secondary program for special needs students age 18-22 who have been awarded a certificate of attendance. They work in conjunction with the *Practical Academic and Curriculum Skills (PACS/Lifeskills)* program within Norwood Senior High School. The goal is to provide training/acquisition skills and lifeskills (social skills, self care, nutrition/exercise, apartment/living care, etc). Most of their time is spent working at a paid job, volunteering, or learning a valuable or interesting skill.

Norwood Senior High School has undertaken an innovative community service project called *PINS (Partners In Norwood Service)*. Through the collaborative efforts of the Student Council, teachers, and administrators, a contract is written in order to allow directed study hall exemption for seniors who perform community service work.

Presently there is no formal common planning time within or among any departments at the high school. The rotation of the seven-day cycle makes it almost impossible. One exception to this is the Special Education Department that sets aside one period per week to discuss new referrals and existing case loads. Most subjects are positioned in a common area within the building, which allows for discussions in the corridor, teachers' room, etc. However, as needs arise, classrooms have been added outside the department common area.

Norwood Senior High School uses a modified block schedule with extended learning time. There are 5 periods a day with a 7 day rotation.

The blocks include the following times:

Block 1 – 65 minutes

Block 2 – 97 minutes

Block 3 - 60 minutes (plus a 28 minute lunch)

Block 4 - 61 minutes

Block 5 - 61 minutes

Classes are grouped in levels: AP (advanced placement), H (honors), C (college), and S (standard). In the content area of math, small group classes are available. Students on an Individualized Education Plan may go to the Learning Center for academic support in a specified subject area or attend the Resource Room where they receive the regular education curriculum from a Resource Room teacher. There are small group classes for ELL students at three levels based on intake assessment. ELL Learning Centers are in place to support content areas.

The Alternative School Program is designed for students who have not performed successfully in the mainstream high school program. There is a required employment component for these students.

Norwood Senior High School also offers a *Life Skills* class for special needs students. The students work on developing math, reading, and writing skills as they relate to daily living/life situations. They are mainstreamed when possible in regular education classes with the assistance of a classroom aide. Graduates of this class may then attend the *LEAD Program* established for the postgraduate until the age of 22.

Norwood Senior High School also houses *The Education Cooperative (TEC)* classroom, which offers a vocational training for special needs students from the surrounding TEC communities.

The percent of ELL students at Norwood Senior High School is 1.2%. The percent of Norwood Senior High School students receiving special education services within the building is 14.3%. This percent increases to 18.9% when students with outside placements are counted.

Teachers are allotted approximately 35 hours of professional development time built into the school year, through in-service days and monthly faculty meetings. Department meetings are left to the discretion of the Department Chair.

Students at Norwood Senior High School go on to post-secondary education at high rates. For the past 3 years over 90% of students have gone on to either a 4-year college or 2-year college. The class of 2005 had 95% of the graduating class go on to college, with 76% attending 4-year and 19% attending 2-year. 4% of this class began immediate employment, and 1% enlisted with the military. The class of 2006 had 94% of the graduating class go on to college, with 78% attending 4-year and 16% attending 2-year. 3% of this class began immediate employment, and 3% enlisted with the military.

The class of 2007 had 90% of the graduating class go on to college, with 75% attending 4-year and 13% attending 2-year. 8% of this class began immediate employment, and 1% enlisted with the military.

Norwood Senior High School presently receives federal funding under Title II regarding teacher quality and technology support. The money designated for teacher quality is used toward professional development of staff members. Norwood Senior High School receives special education funding through the “Entitlement Grant” which is used to fund classroom aides, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and adaptive physical education specialists. The high school also receives various federal grants for ELL specialists and other special education requirements. Norwood Senior High School receives one state grant that is used to fund an academic support teacher.

Currently at Norwood Senior High School, 73.7% of the faculty has attained advanced degrees. 50% of the faculty is presently teaching with a standard/professional license, 32 % with an initial license, and 18% with a preliminary license.

The most significant school initiative at Norwood Senior High School is the new building project. Norwood Senior High School is currently one of 49 schools to have moved on to the feasibility study phase for the Massachusetts State Building Authority (MSBA). Norwood Senior High School has been working with this committee as they learn more about each of the school systems that have submitted statements of interest. Norwood Senior High has provided the MSBA with projected enrollment figures for the future, and at this writing awaits a decision from the board before the district takes the next step toward improving the facility.

School Improvement Planning

School improvement and student performance are measured in a variety of ways at Norwood Senior High School. The Norwood Senior High School *School Improvement Plan* sets annual goals that are updated each year. These goals are set with the Mission Statement as a compass. The Norwood Senior High School *School Council* is responsible for monitoring the progress of these goals annually. Goals set for the 2007-2008 school year include improving ELA MCAS scores, reviewing school guidance services alignment, studying the feasibility of mandating AP tests for those students enrolled, and preparing for the NEASC self-study.

Student performance on MCAS targets both content and individual students. Data analysis makes it possible to isolate the content areas of concern as well as specific students needing additional support. Content areas needing improvement in ELA are addressed within English classes as well as in all disciplines with reading and writing across the curriculum initiatives. Any student struggling to meet the MCAS graduation requirement receives targeted tutorial assistance in Math and targeted assistance in English during the school day.

Norwood Senior High School monitors student progress and proficiency of school-wide expectations as stated in the Mission Statement. These expectations are the school standards that define what students should know and be able to do. The monitoring tool for this is a school-wide rubric system.

Changes in the Norwood Senior High School Mission Statement that occurred in March 2008 included language changes which reflected the present faculty's core values concerning education. Also, amendments were made with two of the school-wide expectations in order to free them from discipline-specific language and make them truly school-wide.

In order to prepare for the visiting committee, Norwood Senior High School has identified the following as challenges facing our school community:

- the present physical condition and age of the school building.
- school-system budget issues (local & state) that don't allow for growth of programs and staffing.
- formal opportunities for faculty to meet within and among departments for professional learning and sharing.
- the present course catalog in terms of offerings, leveling, and electives.

NORWOOD SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Norwood Senior High School is a partnership of students, parents, guardians, staff, and community. Our mission is to encourage students to become independent thinkers who value learning and pursue excellence in the four A's: Academics, Arts, Athletics, and Activities. We provide a safe and supportive environment where students learn to respect themselves, their community, and the diverse world in which we live.

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

- A1. Students will write effectively for a variety of purposes.
- A2. Students will read with understanding from a variety of texts.
- A3. Students will apply reasoning skills to interpret information and solve problems.
- A4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of connections between the past and the present.
- A5. Students will use technology to acquire, organize, and communicate information.
- A6. Students will acquire the knowledge necessary to make informed wellness decisions.

SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS

- S1. Students will work collaboratively and will demonstrate a cooperative attitude.
- S2. Students will behave respectfully.

CIVIC EXPECTATIONS

- C1. Students will participate in community service activities.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

CURRICULUM

INSTRUCTION

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

1

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

The school's mission statement describes the essence of what the school as a community of learners is seeking to achieve. The expectations for student learning are based on and drawn from the school's mission statement. These expectations are the fundamental goals by which the school continually assesses the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Every component of the school community must focus on enabling all students to achieve the school's expectations for student learning.

1. The mission statement and expectations for student learning shall be developed by the school community and approved and supported by the professional staff, the school board, and any other school-wide governing organization.
2. The school's mission statement shall represent the school community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning.
3. The school shall define school-wide academic, civic, and social learning expectations that:
 - are measurable;
 - reflect the school's mission.

4. For each academic expectation in the mission, the school shall have a targeted level of successful achievement identified in a rubric.
5. The school shall have indicators by which it assesses the school's progress in achieving school-wide social and civic expectations.
6. The mission statement and the school's expectations for student learning shall guide the procedures, policies, and decisions of the school and shall be evident in the culture of the school.
7. The school shall review regularly the mission statement and expectations for student learning using a variety of data to ensure that they reflect student needs, community expectations, the district mission, and state and national standards.

Conclusions:

The Norwood Senior High School Mission Statement was developed as a collaborative effort of a diverse group of staff, students, and parents and was unanimously approved and supported by faculty and school committee. At the initial meeting in January 2008, committee members reviewed and reflected upon the current mission statement, comparing and contrasting it to other schools' mission statements. The mission committee used the Endicott Survey to allow both faculty members and parents to assess these shared values and core beliefs of NSHS. Sixty-five to 70% of parents responded to the survey. Feedback from parents and faculty members was used to create a draft of the mission statement, which the school committee adopted on March 12, 2008. The NSHS Mission Statement is included on the school website and in the student handbook. Student leaders and the principal describe attributes and characteristics of students that embody strong aspects of athletics, arts, activities, and academics on "Principal's Corner". The mission is highly visible throughout the school, and 92.8% of the staff and 90% of the students are familiar with the school's mission through the articulation of the four A's. The mission statement of NSHS embodies the spirit of the school culture and is widely supported by students, administrators, and faculty members. (*self-study, Endicott Survey, parents, panel presentation, teachers*)

The application of the four A's is the basis of the school mission and reflects the fundamental values and beliefs held by the school community. Students, parents, and teachers believe in high expectations for all students within a safe and supportive learning environment. School pride, respect for others, and a strong sense of community are evident throughout the school. Sixty-five percent of the NSHS parents believes the school's mission statement, academic, social, and civic expectations embody what the community values and believes about student learning. Parents report that the utilization of the four A's has allowed most students to fully develop their requirements of academia, character, civic responsibility, and social awareness. While the school community is enthusiastic regarding the implementation of the four A's and members of the Norwood Senior High School community can readily speak about the NSHS mission statement and the expectations for student learning, the extent to which the community understands and connects them to student learning is not clearly apparent. As a result, it is not clear that the school's mission statement represents the school community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning. (*teachers, school committee, parents, Endicott Survey, students*)

The faculty and administration at NSHS have established school-wide expectations for student learning, all of which are reflective of the school's mission. Although the school has targeted levels of successful achievement as measured by the school-wide rubric, the faculty has neither implemented them consistently across the school nor used them to create informed decisions about individual and school progress. The goals of each department's curriculum have not been aligned with the expectations and rubrics that are used to measure student achievement. Efforts to clarify how the expectations, school-wide rubrics, and targeted levels of achievement relate to teaching and learning in every classroom will help students, parents, and teachers develop a clear

understanding of how and when students can demonstrate mastery of the school-wide expectations. Thus, not every student has opportunities to practice, achieve, and master the academic, civic, and social learning expectations that are measurable and reflect the school's mission. (*student work, school leadership team, teachers*)

NSHS has developed school-wide rubrics to assess academic learning for each of the academic indicators; however, there are no consistent clear targeted levels of what constitutes successful achievement identified within each rubric. There is no clear and consistent application of the school-wide rubrics in either student outcomes or teacher evaluations. Students are aware of teacher expectations and the use of rubrics in some classes; however, they are unfamiliar with specific mission statement expectations. For example, students know that they are expected to write a five paragraph essay, but they appear to be unaware that they are writing for specific purposes. Norwood Senior High School has not articulated the differences among its mission, expectations, and targeted levels of achievement, hindering assessment of the school's progress in achieving its academic expectations and contributing to the lack of clear understanding of the expectations among some members of the school community. (*teachers, department chairs, student work, self-study*)

NSHS has devised school-wide indicators to assess a student's progress towards achieving school-wide social and civic expectations. Administrators, parents, and faculty members promote curricular and co-curricular community service learning experiences to their students to fulfill school-wide social and civic expectations. Yet, school-wide indicators have yet to be implemented consistently in assessing each student's fulfillment of social and civic expectations across disciplines. While students are fulfilling the requirements of social and civic expectations through their involvement in many activities and social groups offered by NSHS, data is not used to rate the degree to which the school meets each expectation. Regular review of the data is not used effectively to disseminate for analysis and to identify individual students who may not be achieving those expectations. Therefore, the school does not demonstrate that it uses these indicators to assess progress in achieving school-wide social and civic expectations. (*parents, Endicott Survey, teachers, self-study, students*)

While the school community embraces the values of the four A's represented in the mission statement that are evident in the historical culture of the school, these values are not currently used to drive the school's decision-making process. The school committee allows the principal the autonomy and decision-making authority to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning. The four A's impact the culture of the school in ways that prepare students for responsibilities as independent thinkers and life-long learners. While the school committee was able to support two new academic course offerings, endorse a proposal for a new high school building and gain community support for a Proposition 2½ override, only 28.6% of school committee members and 67.2% of teachers employ the mission statement when making or describing important educational decisions concerning teaching and learning. Moreover, while departments have identified the academic expectations for which they are responsible, most departments have yet to connect them with actual classroom and

learning activities to assess student progress in achieving those expectations by using the rubrics consistently. The expectations exist only on paper, are not being consistently used, and are not fully integrated into the school culture. Therefore, the school's procedures, policies, and decisions are not yet driven by a commitment to the statement of the mission expectations for student learning. (*school committee, teachers, school leadership team, Endicott Survey*)

Norwood Senior High School has stated its commitment to regular review of the mission statement and expectations for student learning. The entire community has worked intensively for sixteen months to develop the mission statement, but the process is too recent to effectively incorporate a regular review of this document. The faculty acknowledges the importance of regular review of the mission and expectations and is working toward incorporating regular review as part of its procedures. The school is in the beginning stages of using data derived from a variety of sources and the social and civic expectations results to ensure that the mission and expectations reflect student needs, community expectations, the district mission, and state and national standards. However, until the school embraces the use of rubrics to assess the achievement of the school's academic expectations, it cannot ensure that the student needs, community expectations, the district mission, and state and national standards are reflected in the mission and expectations nor that the learning community's own principles drive its activities and decisions. (*panel presentation, parents, teachers, self-study*)

Commendations:

1. The pride and sense of community in the school shared by parents, students, faculty members, administrators, and members of the school committee as evidenced in the mission statement
2. Commitment of the school community towards the development and sustainment of the Four A's of the mission statement
3. Use of technology to consistently promote the advancement of the mission statement through the presentation of the Four A's
4. The opportunities for students to fulfill social and civic expectations through various community activities, academics, arts, and athletic events
5. Active community, parent, and guardian support in the development of the mission statement

Recommendations:

1. Ensure that the mission statement remains the central driving force within the school
2. Use the mission statement to guide the school decision-making process

3. Establish a clear policy for and an ongoing practice of review and revision of the mission statement and expectations for student learning
4. Display enlarged posters of the mission statement and expectations in classrooms and public areas
5. Integrate the school's mission statement and academic expectations for student learning and the aligned rubrics into daily instructional practice
6. Provide opportunities to increase both teacher understanding and use of rubrics in general and the school-wide rubrics in particular
7. Ensure that all students are aware of the school's academic expectations and are able to use the school-wide rubrics in assessing their own progress in achieving those expectations

2

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

CURRICULUM

The curriculum, which includes coursework, co-curricular activities, and other school-approved educational experiences, is the school's formal plan to fulfill its mission statement and expectations for student learning. The curriculum links the school's beliefs, its expectations for student learning, and its instructional practices. The strength of that link is dependent upon the professional staff's commitment to and involvement in a comprehensive, ongoing review of the curriculum.

1. Each curriculum area shall identify those school-wide academic expectations for which it is responsible.
2. The curriculum shall be aligned with the school-wide academic expectations and shall ensure that all students have sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve each of those expectations.
3. The written curriculum shall:
 - prescribe content;
 - integrate relevant school-wide learning expectations;
 - identify course-specific learning goals;
 - suggest instructional strategies;
 - suggest assessment techniques including the use of school-wide rubrics.
4. The curriculum shall engage all students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking as well as provide opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills.
5. The curriculum shall:
 - be appropriately integrated;
 - emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage.
6. The school shall provide opportunities for all students to extend learning beyond the normal course offerings and the school campus.
7. There shall be effective curricular coordination and articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.
8. Instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, staffing levels, and the resources of the library/media center shall be sufficient to allow for the implementation of the curriculum.
9. The professional staff shall be actively involved in the ongoing development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum based on assessments of student performance in achieving the school's academic expectations and course-specific learning goals.
10. The school shall commit sufficient time, financial resources, and personnel to the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum.
11. Professional development activities shall support the development and implementation of the curriculum.

Conclusions:

Norwood Senior High School has recently established its own set of school-wide academic expectations called the mission statement expectations (MSE's). Each curriculum area at Norwood Senior High School has identified those school-wide academic expectations for student learning for which they have assumed responsibility. The school lists the school-wide expectation in each subject area in the NSHS Program of Studies. Although the mission statement is displayed in the classrooms, the expectations for student learning are not visibly displayed with the mission statement, and most of the learning community, students and parents, are not as familiar with the expectations as they are with the mission. Hence, despite recent efforts to make the expectations for student learning an essential part of the curriculum, students and parents are not aware of how the curriculum connects to the academic expectations and how and when students find the opportunity to meet the academic expectations in each subject area. (*program of studies, teachers, Endicott Study, self-study*)

Norwood Senior High School provides a varied and generous curriculum with an offering of over 200 courses available to its students. Some curriculum areas are aligned with the school's mission and school-wide expectations, and all curriculum guides appear to be linked to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks as well as to the mission statement expectations (MSE's). However, Norwood Senior High School has not developed a formal curriculum plan for assuring that each student will meet all the academic expectations. While some rubrics are in place to assess MSE's, for example in English, social studies, and foreign language, data is not gathered generally, nor is data analyzed to ensure that all students have met each school-wide academic expectation as current leveling of classes by student ability is not consistent with the school's mission statement and expectations and does not align with current pedagogic research on student learning. Moreover, all students in every department do not see or do not use the rubrics on a consistent basis. When instructional strategies and assessment techniques are not based on the school-wide expectations and their aligned rubrics, there can be no consistent set of expectations for all and neither student nor school progress can be meaningfully assessed to use to guide curricular change. (*self-study, teachers, student work, curriculum guides*)

The Norwood Senior High School's Program of Studies describes the content of every course offered, along with referencing the specific MSE's that each course uses. The written curriculum guide for each department at Norwood Senior High School contains specific content for each course offering, and the curriculum guide structure appears to be fairly consistent among curriculum areas. Most curriculum guides include course content, essential questions, student learning expectations, suggested teaching and assessment strategies, and student activities. While the majority of the written curriculum guides contain learning expectations which integrate relevant school-wide learning expectations and most guides include a section that indicates alignment to the state frameworks, there is no over-arching connection to the mission academic expectations. While teachers concur that they agree with and believe in the mission statement and expectations, they have yet to incorporate them as the guiding and driving forces in their

curriculum and review and development. Moreover, over the last ten years, departments have developed curriculum maps for each course. Currently, these maps are being converted to updated curriculum guides, which are in various stages of completion. This lack of completion with the curriculum guides further compounds the absence of consistence using the mission statement and expectations to drive curriculum development and revision. (*department curriculum guides, program of studies, teachers*)

The NSHS Program of Studies provides four challenge levels for students: standard, college, honors, and advanced placement. The curriculum attempts to engage students in inquiry, problem-solving skills, and higher order thinking. While 100% of the teachers agrees that students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills in their classes, only 76% of students reports that their teachers encourage them to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills in class. Evidence of inquiry, problem-solving and higher order thinking skills can be found in each department. Across departments, students are engaged in journals, seminars, debates, and simulations. For example, the ninth grade world history students participate in a simulation of the Congress of Vienna. By making decisions in a historical context, students engage in higher order thinking skills and analyze events in history from the perspective of those who experienced it. In English classes, students use Socratic seminars to engage in higher order thinking skills with their study of *Night* by Elie Wiesel. In foreign language classes, students are asked to react to pictures, videos, and songs and to support their responses through written narratives in the target language. Science courses use lab experiments to promote inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills. In some math classes, students describe and support the problem-solving processes they used to arrive at their solutions in written form. Students are provided opportunities for authentic application of knowledge and skills. The TEC Schools to Careers Partnership is a collaboration of schools that work together with businesses and institutions to give students opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. TEC provides internships for students, and it sponsors career fairs and field trips to public and private businesses such as biotechnology companies, financial institutions, local businesses, and courthouses. In economics classes students participate in business simulations where they create, market, and sell an original product in the community. The social studies and fine arts departments collaborate with the Norwood Historical Society at the Day House, an historic home in Norwood, to create an authentic historical experience where students can apply what they have learned in class. In addition, the foreign language exchange program, math research, writing, acting, music, TV and video production, cooperative teaching, and yearbook provide opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills. NSHS states that their mission is to encourage students to become independent thinkers who value learning. Although the curriculum contains higher order teaching strategies, the delivery of instruction is inconsistent throughout the building. While many opportunities can be evidenced for authentic application of knowledge and skills, less than 50% of students feels that NSHS provides learning opportunities for the application of knowledge and skills off-campus. Furthermore, not all students are provided ample and equal opportunity to demonstrate proficiency in meeting the expectations of the mission statement. In addition, the Norwood Senior High School Mission Statement states that students will participate in community service activities, yet the graduation policy does not include a community

service requirement as cited in the Civic Expectations of the mission statement. When explicit curricular emphasis on inquiry, problem-solving, higher order thinking, authentic learning, and alternative assessments are made available to all students in all courses, the school will ensure adequate student preparation for the next phases of their lives. (*program of studies, classroom observations, teachers, Endicott Study, self-study*)

The faculty emphasizes depth of understanding over breadth of coverage in their approaches to teaching the curriculum. Examples of this depth were evident during student shadowing, observation of classes, and in student work. The teachers use the time provided by the sixty plus minute periods to provide various instructional strategies such as self-directed learning, and cooperative learning. However, there is little integration of curriculum across disciplines, and where interdisciplinary connections are present, they occur randomly and serendipitously at best. Whereas teachers are able to cite examples of integrated learning in some subject areas such as science and math, there is no consistent opportunity to develop lessons co-taught by teachers from different disciplines or to develop interdisciplinary units in the common practices of the school. Whereas almost 68% of students reports that their teachers include topics from other subject areas in their classes, in fact, there are no interdisciplinary courses offered in the NSHS Program of Studies. Furthermore, curriculum guides do not formally provide for application of interdisciplinary instruction. Teachers have expressed a desire to develop and implement interdisciplinary courses in the curriculum guides and program of studies. However, teachers cite the lack of common planning time as a deterrent to formal development and implementation of interdisciplinary courses. Norwood Senior High School has not made an interdisciplinary approach to curriculum and instruction a major focus for student learning. Thus, the school's mission goal of meaningful learning for all students is not yet being fully realized. (*Endicott Study, self-study, classroom observations, teachers*)

The school notes the provision of numerous opportunities for students to extend learning beyond the normal course offerings and the school campus. A number of activities is available to students through the academic departments, extra-curricular and co-curricular clubs, sports teams, and community-related experiences. Over thirty clubs are available for student participation, as well as fifty-one athletic teams representing varsity, junior varsity, and freshman team offerings. However, only 39.8% of the students and 47.7% of the parents report that the high school provides opportunities for learning off-campus (e.g., field trips, internships, college courses, etc.). Students report that community service has been eliminated as a graduation requirement. No collegiate institutions, vocational/technical schools, adult education institutions, or e-learning programs are available to students at the high school. In addition, there is no specific data collection and analysis related to student participation in extended learning opportunities. Consequently, the high school is unable to ascertain the degree to which students are utilizing existing extended learning opportunities, and whether there is a range of meaningful, self-directed learning opportunities for a large number of students. (*students, self-study, Endicott Study*)

There is some vertical curriculum coordination with the sending middle school because of grade 6-12 department chairs who are responsible for coordinating curriculum between the middle and high school and supervising and evaluating their subject area grade 6-12 teachers. The coordinators spend considerable time at both the middle and

high school, but there is little curricular coordination or articulation between or among the academic areas within the high school. A major detriment to coordinating and articulating the curriculum within the high school is a lack of common planning time. The staff attends a single forty-five minute building/department meeting per month. The current high school schedule, created to enhance student time on learning, is a limiting factor to the amount of common planning time available to the staff. There has also been significant turnover in the central office and middle school administration: for example, the recently appointed assistant superintendent is currently the interim superintendent, and the position of assistant superintendent is vacant; and the middle school administration is new, and there are competing high priority middle school issues that have had to be addressed. There is no single coordinating position within the district with the responsibility of coordinating curriculum or leading the K-12 school district to develop an interdisciplinary curricular approach. Therefore, effective curricular coordination and articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with the sending school are not enhancing student learning. What remains to be put in place is a systematic structure with adequate leadership, time, and expertise to ensure that the expectations for student learning are addressed. (*sending administrators, teachers, department chairs, self-study, collective bargaining agreement*)

Staffing levels, instructional materials, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to allow for the implementation of the curriculum. However, staff members, administrators, and board members recognize that the available technology and facilities are inadequate to support the high school curriculum. The high school currently has only five Smart Boards®. The inadequacies of the facilities and technology are being addressed with the building of a new, well-equipped high school. However, little preparation has been provided or is planned at this time in not only the use of Smart Boards® technology but also in the exploration, utilization, and training necessary to learn new software programs, such as NetTrekker, United Streaming, and RM Mathematics, which could greatly enhance the provision of the curriculum to the students. Also, although the library/media center has sufficient resources, it is not fully utilized. Consequently, insufficient utilization and/or training regarding technology are preventing the most effective implementation of the curriculum. (*self-study, teachers, school committee, school leadership team, Endicott Study*)

Significant time has been utilized over a period of ten years to develop curriculum maps, and, more recently, curriculum guides to document the curriculum, with little emphasis on the revision of curriculum. Attention to curriculum evaluation and revision is characterized as informal and circumstantial. In addition to the lack of time utilized to further develop the curriculum, it is also noted that little analysis of the student performance data available has been undertaken nor are teachers and students using and developing understanding of the school-wide rubrics. The lack of formal curriculum revision, compounded by little analysis of student performance data, prevents the ongoing necessary development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum. (*teachers, school leadership team, Endicott Study*)

Insufficient time, financial resources, and personnel have been committed to the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum. Only 41% of the staff agrees that the school provides sufficient time for them to develop, evaluate, and revise curriculum. Much work needs to be done to build a curriculum in all areas of the educational program that will insure that all students are challenged to achieve and be assessed on the school's academic expectations. Because curriculum evaluation and revision are not seen as a priority, assessments of student performance in achieving the school's academic expectations that should inform the process are not being realized. (*self-study, teachers, Endicott Study, collective bargaining agreement*)

Professional development activities for the past several years have not supported the development and implementation of a more consistent, aligned, and challenging curriculum for all students. Only 45.6% of the staff agrees that professional development supports curricular processes. Lack of time and finances militate against adequate professional development. There has been a significant reduction in district funds allocated for professional development. In addition, meetings for professional and curriculum development are not scheduled on a regular basis. The expectations have been identified for the curriculum, but how they are to be made real, actually brought into the classroom through lesson design, and used to improve and assess student learning has not been clearly articulated. The progress on this work varies from department to department, but the professional development time has not helped to support this effort. When all teachers focus on ensuring that the school's academic expectations become real learning goals for all students and use the aligned rubrics to support and assess student learning, curriculum development will have achieved a major step in insuring improving learning for all students. (*teachers, school leadership team, Endicott Study*)

Commendations:

1. The effort of staff members to complete curriculum guides, content, and student expectations with little designated professional time to work collaboratively
2. The extensive course offerings
3. The numerous examples of student engagement in higher order thinking skills, inquiry, and problem solving
4. The TEC Schools to Careers Partnership's support of the curriculum within and beyond the school campus
5. The openness and collaboration of the faculty members to share curricular ideas and instructional strategies among and across departments despite the lack of a formal procedure

Recommendations:

1. Ensure that the school's academic expectations become the driving force in developing, assessing, and revising curriculum
2. Develop and implement a plan to ensure that the school's academic expectations and their aligned rubrics become an integral component of all course curricula
3. Ensure that the curricula for all levels of classes have high expectations and challenge all students with higher order thinking, problem-solving, relevant learning activities, and authentic and alternative assessments
4. Evaluate the impact of course leveling on students' self-esteem and achievement using the extensive research available on grouping and best practices to ensure that all students have sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve each of the expectations for student learning
5. Collect and analyze specific student data related to participation in extended learning opportunities to ascertain the degree to which student opportunities are being utilized, and where these opportunities can be extended or revised to better meet the needs of the students
6. Formulate a K-12 curriculum and professional development plan for the school district, inclusive of student performance data analysis, providing district-wide leadership, time lines for development, and professional assistance
7. Determine how the existing as well as future district resources, i.e. library/media center, technology, and training, can be more fully utilized to enhance curriculum delivery
8. Designate time, financial resources, and personnel to curriculum development, evaluation, and revision

3

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

INSTRUCTION

The quality of instruction in a school is the single most important factor affecting the quality of student learning, the achievement of expectations for student learning, the delivery of the curriculum, and the assessment of student progress. Instructional practices must be grounded in the school's mission and expectations for student learning, supported by research in best practice, and refined and improved based on identified student needs. Teachers are expected to be reflective about their instructional strategies and to collaborate with their colleagues about instruction and student learning.

1. Instructional strategies shall be consistent with the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning.
2. Instructional strategies shall:
 - personalize instruction;
 - make connections across disciplines;
 - engage students as active learners;
 - engage students as self-directed learners;
 - involve all students in higher order thinking to promote depth of understanding;
 - provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge or skills;
 - promote student self-assessment and self-reflection.

3. Teachers shall use feedback from a variety of sources including other teachers, students, supervisors, and parents as a means of improving instruction.
4. Teachers shall be expert in their content area, knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches, and reflective about their own practices.
5. Discussion of instructional strategies shall be a significant part of the professional culture of the school.
6. Technology shall be integrated into and supportive of teaching and learning.
7. The school's professional development program shall be guided by identified instructional needs and shall provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies.
8. Teacher supervision and evaluation processes shall be used to improve instruction for the purposes of enhancing student learning and meeting student needs.

Conclusions:

Many Norwood teachers employ instructional strategies that are consistent with the school's mission statement. The faculty members are well aware of the four A's: Academics, Arts, Athletics, and Activities, and they emphasize academics over the other three. The climate in the school is favorable to the learning process. Parents are supportive of the administrators and trust day-to-day instruction to the teachers and administration. Some students report that in many of the courses available teachers encourage them to become independent thinkers who value learning. The learning environment at Norwood Senior High School encourages students to take advantage of a wide variety of classes that serve their personal needs. (*self-study, observations, teachers, students*)

Instructional strategies vary widely at Norwood Senior High School. Many teachers at Norwood Senior High School are focused on developing more student-centered learning through long-term projects that are to be completed outside of the classroom setting. Sixty-one and a half percent of students states teachers use a variety of methods to teach. For example, faculty members use a variety of teaching approaches to include all students as much as possible. Some teachers target learning styles by working through small group and cooperative learning experiences, tiered assignments, teacher consultations, class lectures, visual and aural prompts, and self-directed independent learning opportunities. While efforts in higher order thinking and questioning are practiced with students enrolled in honors level or higher classes, many of the tests are structured as objective rather than subjective where higher level thinking can be demonstrated. There is an emphasis on cross discipline instruction in some classes. English, science, social studies, and the fine arts make use of assignments and projects that involve interdisciplinary components. Although there are varied instructional strategies being used throughout the building, it is not clear that all students benefit from instructional strategies that foster high expectations as is called for in the mission statement. Some classes on all four levels reflect traditional instructional strategies and evaluations without the challenge of high order thinking, problem-solving, alternative assessments, and application of learning. The lack of broad-based interdisciplinary connections across the curriculum other than English, science, social studies, and the fine arts and, more importantly, the lack of higher order thinking and self-directed learning in those courses, limit the opportunity for students to develop the skills needed in an information-based, technology-driven, world economy. Thus, not all Norwood Senior High School students are being adequately prepared for post-high school education and careers. (*observations, teachers, student shadowing, student work, Endicott Study*)

Teachers cite the lack of common planning time as an impediment to increasing collaboration time to meet with other teachers for feedback on instructional practices. As well, they also cite the one contractual meeting per month as an impediment to reflective dialogue among their peers. That meeting is either a general faculty meeting used to discuss school-wide business or a department meeting which does not generally discuss instruction. Parents show little involvement with improving instruction. Parents report

that the teachers know best, but only 23.8% of surveyed parents indicates that teachers ask for their input regarding their child's instruction. Supervisor feedback comes from the formal evaluations per contract, and 68.3% of teachers reports that input from supervisors evaluating their teaching play an important role in improving their instruction. MCAS and SAT results are used to identify areas of weakness. Some Norwood teachers also use informal feedback from other teachers and department chairs as a means to improve instruction. There are four main areas of feedback: surveys, parent communication, evaluations, and student comments within class discussions. Forty-seven percent of students states their teachers ask them for input to improve class instruction. Consequently, teachers do not benefit from extensive feedback about instruction from their colleagues, supervisors, students, or parents. Thus, the current model for formal evaluation, particularly of tenured teachers, currently does not support widespread improvement of instruction. (*self-study, parents, teachers, Endicott Survey*)

The formal discussion of instructional strategies is not a significant part of the professional culture of the school at this time. Though teachers regularly engage in informal conversations with their colleagues and supervisors about instructional strategies, they do not have a formal process in place to facilitate such discussions. Sixty-eight percent of teachers reports that these informal meetings result in personal or professional gains. The current teachers' contract allows only one meeting per month, whether it is a faculty meeting or a department meeting. There has been very little time at faculty or department meetings specifically set aside for the discussion of instructional strategies. Many teachers report that a lack of common planning time remains a factor that limits opportunities to engage in a process to improve instructional strategies used in the classroom as well as developing strategies for students to be active, self-directed learners. Fifty-five percent of Norwood teachers attending informal department meetings reports that they benefit personally and professionally from the information collected at the meetings. The lack of formalized opportunities to discuss varied instructional strategies limits professional growth and hinders improved student learning. (*self-study, panel presentation, teacher interviews*)

Some teachers at Norwood integrate technology into their instruction and use it to support teaching and learning, but there is limited availability of technology at any one time. Teachers must reserve LCD projectors and E-Clickers days in advance of the class in which it is needed. Many departments have incorporated technology into their respective curricula, however and across many departments, teachers use Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint, overheads, Media Player, the Internet, Teacher Web Pages, Blogging, e-mail, EZ Post, Media Carts, and Smart Boards® and E-Clicker software in their classroom teaching. Students are required to use technology across a variety of disciplines where they develop project-based assignments. Teachers incorporate technology into their instruction in foreign language through the use of film, blogging, and new language labs specifically designed to support language acquisition. Economics and accounting students use a computer-stimulation business program to develop a marketing program and compete against other schools in the area. Technology is used to help students with individual educational plans such as books on tape, electronic scanning of assignments, and use of computers in all assignments. Students produce a

morning news show for announcements that is also broadcast on a local cable access channel live and replayed twice a day. Students are called upon to use technology as a means to apply knowledge and increase computer literacy. Continued and increased supported integration of technology throughout the entire facility will greatly enhance the learning of all students in all subject areas. (*self-study, students, teachers, panel discussion, facility tour*)

Norwood Senior High School provides only limited opportunities for professional development. All new teachers are required to participate in a mentoring program with a veteran teacher. Mentors are supposed to be allowed to meet with their new teacher for two release days per year, but this is not always done. Three half and one full professional development days are provided to teachers during this school year. New teachers are encouraged to take *The Skillful Teacher* course. All teacher supervisors are certified in *Observing and Analyzing Teaching* method. The district provides reimbursement for graduate-level courses up to \$600 per year or \$300 per course. Teachers report that in order to incorporate technology within their instruction, more professional development opportunities need to be provided within such areas, however. The limited choices for professional development have prohibited teachers from participating in professional development outside of their content area. There is now a district level professional development committee that has been implemented to create professional development opportunities throughout the system. While the district and school may establish professional priorities, teacher input into the establishment of individual professional goals would provide teachers with a sense of ownership and the opportunity to develop and improve their personal instructional strategies. (*self-study, panel discussion, teachers*)

The teacher supervision and evaluation process, though clearly defined, is not an adequate means to improve instruction. It encompasses both formal and informal observations, and its components vary depending on the teacher's tenure status. Non-professional status teachers are evaluated twice a year and professional status teachers are evaluated once every two years. Department chairs are the primary evaluators of all Norwood Senior High School faculty members to ensure strong content knowledge and practices. The administration is involved in the evaluation of teachers when requested by the department chair. Usually the evaluation process is a four-step process. The process includes a pre-observation meeting, the formal observation, a post observation meeting, and finally a written observation report that is included in the teacher's professional file. The emphasis in the evaluation process is placed on assisting the teacher in self-improvement. However, the supervision and evaluation processes do not seem to be structured to improve instruction and thus meet student learning needs. Without providing sufficient feedback and appropriate self-reflection on instruction and addressing teacher concerns, this process does not effectively meet students' learning needs. (*self-study, panel discussion, teachers*)

Commendations:

1. Use of technology which enhances instruction as well as student work
2. Teachers on their own time collaborate on lesson design and assessments
3. The daily television broadcast that is student-produced and broadcast on a local cable access channel
4. The establishment of a professional development committee to enhance offerings to meet the needs of high school teachers
5. The availability of the Skillful Teacher program for all new teachers

Recommendations:

1. Ensure that higher level thinking skills and an emphasis on depth over breadth of knowledge exist in all classes for all students on all levels
2. Demonstrate that the instructional strategies integrate the school's academic expectations into the teaching-learning-assessment process in every class at every level
3. Ensure that multiple sources of feedback are used to improve instruction
4. Provide opportunities for students to be active, self-directed learners
5. Increase significantly time available during the school day to provide common planning time, facilitate collaboration, and allow for cross-curricular instruction and learning
6. Increase the variety of instructional strategies for students at all course levels
7. Increase the focus of teacher supervision and evaluation processes on improved instruction

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

4

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Its purpose is to inform students regarding their learning progress and teachers regarding ways to adjust the curriculum and instruction to respond effectively to the learning needs of students. Further, it communicates to the school community the progress of students in achieving the school's expectations for student learning and course-specific learning goals. Assessment results must be continually discussed to improve curriculum and instruction.

1. The school shall have a process to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations in the mission based on school-wide rubrics.
2. The school's professional staff shall use data to assess the success of the school in achieving its social and civic expectations.
3. For each learning activity teachers shall clarify to students the relevant school-wide academic expectations and course-specific learning goals that will be assessed.
4. Teachers shall base classroom assessment of student learning on school-wide and course-specific rubrics.
5. Teachers shall use varied assessment strategies to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies and to assess student growth over time.
6. Teachers shall meet collaboratively to discuss and share student work and the results of student assessments for the purposes of revising the curriculum and improving instructional strategies.
7. The school's professional development program shall provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies.
8. The school's professional staff shall communicate:
 - individual student progress in achieving school-wide academic expectations to students and their families;
 - the school's progress achieving all school-wide expectations to the school community.

Conclusions:

The mission statement is posted throughout the building in every classroom and in some common areas and is found in many publications such as the school website, program of studies, and staff and student handbooks. However, at this time, the academic, social, and civic expectations are not visibly posted with the mission statement in all of these areas. There is not a school-wide connection of these documents to teaching, learning, and assessment at Norwood Senior High School. In several departments, the expectations are integrated into the curriculum and lesson planning, and these departments are developing common assessments that are aligned with the expectations and the school-wide rubrics. A number of faculty members recognizes this deficiency and are intent on correcting it. English, social studies, and foreign language departments have integrated the expectations within their curricula and are using the school-wide rubrics to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations in the mission. Although school-wide rubrics exist and are electronically accessible to all staff, many teachers have not yet made the academic expectations a reality in their classrooms, nor do they yet use these rubrics to assess student learning. Thus, the school does not yet have a process in place to ensure that all faculty members assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving its academic expectations. This disconnect between the classroom and the school's mission and academic expectations creates a lack of focus within and across most disciplines that makes it impossible for all students to achieve the school's expectations nor to understand why they should do so. (*teachers, students, observations, student work, self-study*)

Norwood Senior High School students are very active in co-curricular, community, and athletic activities, all of which are tied into the social expectations of the school. Students participate in a wide variety of community service projects beyond the school day and at their own initiative. The school has implemented a limited monitoring system, as part of its PINS (*Partners in Norwood Service*) program but has not developed this into a formal assessment tool. Although school deans also collect data on behavior and student disciplinary actions, analysis and feedback in the assessment of the behavioral goals is not ongoing. There is neither a formal system, as yet, that combines or analyzes the data from these sources nor an ongoing effort by the professional staff to accumulate data to assess the success of the school in achieving its social and civic expectations. (*teachers, students, profile data, self-study*)

While the mission statement is posted in clear view throughout the school and hung in every classroom, the academic, social, and civic expectations are not included as part of the mission statement. Most teachers have not yet made clear to students how these school-wide academic expectations apply to their courses or how the students will be assessed on achieving them. Many students are not aware of the importance of the academic expectations and their aligned rubrics. There are school-wide rubrics for each of the academic expectations for learning but many teachers are not using these rubrics to assess student learning. Because teachers do not uniformly or consistently use the school-wide rubrics, they cannot monitor ongoing student progress. Some teachers have clearly identified course-specific learning goals and are developing various types of rubrics to assess students on their achievement of those learning goals. However, checklists and/or rating scales that simply list the components of a given assignment do not adequately describe the qualities of varied levels of performance which should make up a rubric. When the qualities of work expected at various levels of performance are

described, it is clearer what needs to be changed in a student's work to achieve a higher level of performance. Faculty members and students need to understand how to use rubrics for qualitative assessment of work and to understand discrete differences in levels of performance in order to assess student progress in meeting school-wide academic expectations for learning. When the school-wide rubrics are used, then the assessment results can be used to improve curriculum and instruction. It may be necessary to provide professional development in the creation and use of rubrics to benefit both students and teachers. (*teachers, students, classroom tours*)

For the most part, teachers use traditional strategies to assess student learning that include daily quizzes, homework assignments, Power Point presentations, laboratory reports, and projects presented both orally and in writing. Some teachers base classroom assessment of student learning on school-wide and course-specific rubrics at least twice a year. For the most part, the rubrics developed are well formulated and concise but have not been sufficiently implemented in a scope that would identify growth and rigor as they could be. Students have commented, however, that the majority of their learning assessments are in the form of multiple-choice, true-false, fill-in-the-blank, and short answer tests. Some students say that rubrics are used in all classes, but in math and science their use is largely confined to project-based assignments. They further report that few assessments are multi-page essays and that writing assignments are not weighted as heavily as tests. Little constructive feedback was provided to students on the student work samples made available to the visiting team. Without providing varied and/or authentic assessment to students as well as feedback on how to improve, all students do not have sufficient opportunities to demonstrate fully what they have learned in classes or how to think about what they learned. Thus, some professional development in creating and using varying methods of assessments may be necessary for teachers. The priority of using the school-wide expectations and the accompanying rubrics as part of the overall assessment of student learning is left to the discretion of the teacher, making it difficult for students to assess their work and hindering the school in consistently evaluating the success of the mission and expectations. (*teachers, students, student work, self-study*)

While there has been some initial professional development on collaboratively assessing student work, teachers rarely have the time to meet collaboratively to discuss and share student work and the results of student assessment. Teachers report a lack of common planning time as a hindrance to discussing student work in a more formal way. When the school moved to a rotating five-period a day model with extended blocks, the schedule did not allow sufficient common professional time, including common planning time, and while there is a number of half-day and full-day professional development days, that time has been used to prepare for the accreditation visit. Sufficient time was not provided to continue to develop departmental common assessments, create and revise curriculum, or to share and discuss student work. Teachers meet collaboratively to discuss student work at their own initiative and then only on an informal basis. Time to collaborate with colleagues on student work, both within a discipline and across disciplines, is not specifically scheduled, and the availability of such time is limited by the school schedule. Sufficient professional development time has not been allocated for teachers to begin the process to collaborate on the results of newly revised common assessments in those departments where they are in use. Examination of student work and assessment, therefore, does not have a significant effect on curriculum revision and the improvement of instructional

practices. The push to create departmental common assessments across all levels should provide the results needed to begin to make necessary curricular revisions, to improve the level of rigor in all levels, and to improve instruction, and this is also the purpose for effective school-wide rubrics used and understood by all teachers and students. (*teachers, students, observations, student work, school leadership team, self-study*)

There is a structure in place for professional development. However, at the present time Norwood Senior High School teachers have not been able to concentrate their efforts to collaborate with other departments and disciplines because of the present schedule. District-wide curriculum development is offered through both full and half-day in-service opportunities throughout the year. Topics for recent professional development include: ELL/CAT II training, Learning by Design, curriculum mapping and technology integration training. Also offered are after school workshops such as mentoring and induction of first year teachers and dimensions of learning and skillful teacher courses for more experienced teachers. Completing these initiatives has been hampered by changing priorities as identified by the central office. To meet the mission, the school must use the school's academic expectations as the focus for common departmental assessments as an important step in making those expectations and their aligned rubrics a reality in lesson design and instructional strategies. Results from the common assessments could guide curricular development and future instructionally-based professional development devoted to the creation of common assessments and the evaluation of course-specific rubrics. (*teachers, school leadership team, department chairs, self-study*)

Norwood Senior High School regularly communicates to the students, parents or guardians, and the community on subjects such as student academic progress and school progress in achieving certain goals, but this information is not connected to school-wide academic and social and civic expectations. Methods of communication about student progress include report cards, mid-term progress reports, parent-guardian conferences, information nights, the Connect Ed technology system, e-mail, and school media production. School-wide rubrics express expectations for the mission statement, but this assessment is not shared with families in a planned and cumulative profile. Specifically, the social and civic expectations are not all assessed, and this information is not tracked throughout the four-year high school experience to demonstrate the growth of the student. Participation in civic and community opportunities provides seniors with special privileges for early dismissal and/or late arrival to school. This policy encourages students to participate in civic and community service. A record of civic and social participation for individual students is kept by the dean of students. Community service participation is a valuable part of a student's overall profile, but these records are not being utilized at this time. School-wide academic expectations will become familiar to parents and community members when their presence in school publications and their importance as guiding principles become part of the communications from teachers to students and/or parents. (*teachers, students, parents, self-study*)

Commendations:

1. Student participation in a wide variety of community service projects beyond the school day and at their own initiative
2. The use of school-wide rubrics and development and use of common departmental assessments of student learning within some departments
3. Teachers who develop their own rubrics to assess the achievement of course goals

Recommendations:

1. Use the school-wide rubrics to assess student performance in achieving the mission and expectations for learning
2. Ensure that all teachers use the school-wide rubrics to assess the school's academic expectations
3. Ensure that all students know and understand the school's academic expectations and the aligned rubrics and how they will be assessed on their achievement of those expectations
4. Use the assessment data in developing and revising curriculum and adjusting instruction
5. Display examples of exemplary student work in classrooms
6. Develop and use a broad range of assessment strategies and practices to address the varied learning styles of students and to allow students varied opportunities to apply and demonstrate more effectively what they have learned
7. Use the school-wide rubrics to assess student performance in achieving the mission and expectations for learning
8. Provide additional training for teachers to improve their understanding of the development and use of rubrics that describe the varied qualities of different levels of performance
9. Expand the assessment of achieving civic expectations beyond the simple completion of community service as a basis for special privileges for early dismissal and/or late arrival to school
10. Provide common planning time for teachers of similar disciplines to develop assessment strategies that inform their instructional strategies and engage in an analysis of student work
11. Increase, enlarge, and improve the display of the mission, rubrics and exemplars of student work in the classrooms to encourage students to self-assess

12. Report student progress on school-wide expectations to parents and community on a regular basis with information that will make it meaningful to them

SUPPORT STANDARDS

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

SUPPORT STANDARD

5

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

The way in which a school organizes learning for students, fosters leadership, and engages its members has a profound effect on teaching and learning. The professional culture of the school must be characterized by thoughtful, reflective, and constructive discourse about decision-making and practices which supports student learning and well-being.

1. The school board and superintendent shall ensure that the principal has sufficient autonomy and decision-making authority to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning.
2. The principal shall provide leadership in the school community by creating and maintaining a shared vision, direction, and focus for student learning.
3. Teachers as well as administrators other than the principal shall provide leadership essential to the improvement of the school.
4. The organization of the school and its educational programs shall promote the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
5. Student grouping patterns shall reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, reflect current research and best practices, and support the achievement of the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
6. The schedule shall be driven by the school's mission and expectations for student learning and shall support the effective implementation of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
7. Meaningful roles in the decision-making process shall be accorded to students, parents, and all members of the school staff to promote an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership.
8. Each teacher shall have a student load that enables the teacher to meet the learning needs of individual students.
9. There shall be a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult member of the school community in addition to the school guidance counselor who personalizes each student's educational experience, knows the student well, and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning.
10. The professional staff shall collaborate within and across departments in support of learning for all students.
11. All school staff shall be involved in promoting the well-being and learning of students.
12. Student success shall be regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed.
13. The climate of the school shall be safe, positive, respectful, and supportive, resulting in a sense of pride and ownership.
14. The school board shall support the implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning.

Conclusions:

The school committee and the superintendent provide the principal with sufficient autonomy and decision-making authority to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning. The principal has the autonomy to create, prioritize, and advocate priorities for the budget, goal-setting, and the curriculum as well as for student safety. The interim superintendent took office in August 2009 and is equally supportive of the principal. The high school administration, the faculty, and parents report the principal has the autonomy and authority needed to lead the school in achieving its mission. The recent administrative changes at the central office may have resulted in initiatives that are yet to be completed as well as some confusion, yet this turnover has not limited the high school principal's autonomy and authority, and he has been able to effectively lead the faculty in its work to achieve the school's mission. (*school committee, teachers, school leadership team, self-study*)

The principal of Norwood Senior High School provides leadership in the school community by maintaining a shared vision, direction, and focus for student learning. The principal is a popular and very well-respected leader in the community. He is a driving force behind many of the successes at Norwood Senior High School. The principal has been a source of stability during recent administrative changes at central office, and as a result of this stability, the high school continued to move forward with its self-study and a building project that will be completed in 2011. The principal plays a vital role in the hiring process and in the professional growth of his teaching staff. The principal is clearly the primary spokesperson for the school, and he attends nearly every school-related event. He is well known in the community, and he invariably projects a positive image for the school. The Norwood community is aware of the four A's because of the principal's consistent focus on these elements of the school mission. Despite the principal's frequent and public articulation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning, however, some members of the school community, including parents, teachers, and students are not always familiar with the mission statement or are unable to adequately explain the mission statement. The inability of some members of the community to understand or explain the school's vision and direction points out a need for continued efforts to publicize the need for cohesion and work to effectively implement its mission. (*students, teachers, parents, school committee, self-study*)

Teachers as well as administrators other than the principal provide the leadership essential to the improvement of the school. Educators repeatedly state that the principal appropriately delegates important decision-making opportunities that impact curriculum and instruction to other administrators and to faculty members. The principal entrusts the details of scheduling to the vice-principal, who also facilitates the development of new programs such as Peer Academic Support Services (P.A.S.S.). Deans and teachers report that the deans have the autonomy to address student behavioral issues appropriately, and these decisions are supported by the principal. Teachers have opportunities to take temporary leadership roles as evidenced by the teachers who served on the NEASC steering committee and as team chairs. Members of the faculty senate report they feel comfortable bringing faculty concerns as well as proposals for

school improvement to the principal for legitimate consideration. Thus, all the administrators are respected as the leadership team in the school which facilitates necessary communication and builds consensus to continue the forward progress of this school. (*teachers, school leadership team, self-study, Endicott Survey*)

The organization and educational programs of Norwood Senior High School provide some support of the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning. All constituents of the school community report that the current administrative structure works efficiently to support the school's mission and expectations for student learning. The school provides a full complement of academic, arts, athletic, and other co-curricular activities as part of its program. Norwood Senior High School offers academic classes of varying levels and subject areas and has recently taken steps to more effectively address the needs of specialized populations, such as the students who would benefit from alternative education as well as students with individual education plans (IEPs). The introduction of the life skills class, the LEAD program and the practical academic and curriculum skills programs reflect the school's efforts to more effectively address the learning needs of students with IEPs. In some instances, the administration can informally provide common professional collaboration time. The lack of formal, scheduled collaborative time for teachers, however, has limited their ability to develop common assessments, analyze assessment data, and chart a coordinated curriculum, thereby limiting the school's ability to meet the expectations for student learning. (*self-study, teachers, department chairs, school leadership team*)

Student grouping patterns do not adequately reflect the academic diversity of the student body, and do not adequately foster heterogeneity, reflect current research and best practices, and support the achievement of the school's mission and expectations for student learning. Parents and teachers report that there are questions and concerns regarding the implementation of heterogeneous grouping. Fifty-five percent of parents believes that student grouping patterns reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, reflect current research, and support achievement of the school's mission. There is a discrepancy between administrators and faculty members in the believing that grouping patterns at Norwood support heterogeneity, and nearly half of the parents believe it does not. The current leveling is not consistent with the school's mission statement and expectations and does not align with current pedagogic research on student learning. When addressed, a reduction in leveling would result in students of different skills and achievement levels in the same classrooms, creating a more heterogeneous mix in all classes. Such a change would bring a significantly enhanced opportunity for improved student learning for all students, but it would also bring a significant challenge to the talents of dedicated Norwood faculty members. Any future study of this initiative must include the input from department chairs and faculty members and outlines of research and training on best instructional practices for a diversity of students as well as clear information for teachers, students, and parents about the impact of leveling on student self-perceptions and academic achievement. As a result of providing more flexibility in course selections, more students are taking advanced courses and differentiated instruction has begun to be utilized in some classrooms by teachers. Many teachers believe they are not equipped with the requisite pedagogical skills to be effective at teaching more heterogeneous classes. However, encouraging students to take more demanding courses affords the opportunity for *all* students to challenge themselves and to be better prepared for college. The proud student-centered tradition at

Norwood Senior High School will be enhanced by its efforts to open the doors of opportunity for those students who wish to take on a higher challenge. (*self-study, teachers, school leadership team*)

The schedule is driven by the school's mission and expectations for student learning; however, it provides only limited support for the effective implementation of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The rotating five-period a day model with extended blocks for learning allows a variety of instructional approaches and assessment strategies in use in many classes by teachers. However, the schedule does not allow for sufficient common professional time, including common planning time, in the school schedule. Department chairs and teachers report that curriculum guides that are connected to the school's mission and expectations for student learning have not been completed for all subject areas, in part because of a lack of common professional time to complete these documents. (*self-study, teachers, department chairs*)

The faculty and department chairs describe a need to add electives and other new courses to more effectively meet the needs of their students. Some teachers also express concerns regarding the effectiveness of the ninety-seven minute block. Faculty members have suggested that the current five-period a day schedule does not provide more flexibility as well as collaboration and cross-disciplinary planning for teachers. A ninety-seven minute block also includes a significant amount of non-instructional time during directed study periods, thus limiting the faculty's ability to collaborate to effectively improve school's curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Thus, there are opportunities to increase student time on learning as well as opportunities for faculty members to participate in collaboration with a creative restructuring of the current scheduling design. (*self-study, teachers, department chairs, school leadership team*)

Meaningful roles in the decision-making process are accorded to students, parents, and all members of the school staff to promote an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership. School staff members report they have meaningful roles in decision-making through the active faculty senate and the role of teachers in developing new courses. The NEASC self-study process has promoted a sense of participation and encouraged teacher leadership in the building. The school council and parent teacher association (PTA) play an active role in the school, and parent group representatives also state that they are satisfied with their role in decision-making. Many parents willingly serve as representatives in support groups such as athletic and art booster groups. Thirty-five percent of students and forty-six percent of parents feel they have a meaningful role in decision-making. While a number of students and parents state they have meaningful roles in the decision-making process at the high school, there are opportunities for additional stakeholders to participate in decision-making. (*parents, students, teachers, self-study*)

Many, but not all, teachers have a student load that enables the teacher to meet the learning needs of individual students. In general, class sizes are reasonable for many core academic subjects. Many teachers in core subjects have an average class size of twenty students, but there are some classes, particularly elective classes including physical education, in which class sizes exceed the teacher's ability to effectively meet the learning needs of all. Larger

classes also impact a student's interaction time with teachers, the student's ability to participate in whole class discussions, and the overall climate in the classroom. A better balance in class size would provide a better academic experience for all students. (*self-study, teachers, parents, student*)

Norwood Senior High School does not yet have a formal, ongoing, mentoring program through which each student has an adult member of the school community, in addition to the school guidance counselor, who personalizes each student's educational experience, knows the student well, and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning. The school provides many opportunities for students to interact in a supportive way with adult members of the school community. A wide range of adults is available to support students. There is currently a consideration of using health classes to address the lack of a formal advisory program. The current informal approach to advising students benefits some students but not all. Without a formal advisory program to ensure that every student has an adult school community member who can effectively support the student, the absence of an inclusive culture and the interest of adults in students' overall well-being will not encourage meaningful relationships between the adult and student that are naturally fostered during the school hours and well beyond when teachers would routinely encourage students to see them after school hours to review specific classroom work. (*self-study, teachers, students*)

The professional staff has extremely limited opportunities to collaborate within and across departments in support of learning for all students. Teachers routinely find ways to informally collaborate during department working lunches, voluntary after school department meetings in some departments, and through hallway conversations. These informal approaches are applauded, but the lack of formally scheduled time for professional collaboration must be addressed. Formal, scheduled opportunities for planning programs, staff development, and vertical and horizontal articulation of the curriculum would contribute to a richer academic experience for teachers as well as their students. Failure to provide adequate professional collaborative time limits the school's ability to effectively improve the curriculum, instructional approaches, and assessment practices. (*teachers, self-study, department chairs, school leadership team*)

Norwood Senior High School recognizes student successes in a number of ways. Morning announcements, display cases, awards night, concerts, plays, and the regular posting of the honor roll are all examples of student recognition. While 59.3% of students feels they have been recognized for something they have accomplished at school, 95.7% of faculty members indicates that student success is regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed. Approximately 78% of parents acknowledges that their children are recognized for things they have accomplished at school. Students are the focus of learning at Norwood. All adults are committed to supporting student learning. Teachers, secretaries, and other support staff members could all explain the four A's and how the four A's concept drives the program at Norwood Senior High School. Administrators, deans, guidance counselors, teachers, and support staff members are all committed to helping students reach the academic, social, and civic expectations of the school. This support is evident through the efforts of teachers in the classroom and the consistent presence of faculty members in the halls when students are passing. While student work is prominently displayed in various parts of the building including the main

entrance, it is often not displayed in individual classrooms. The large numbers of faculty and staff members who attend sports events and other after hours activities such as plays and shows indicate wide support for students. A positive rapport exists between teachers and students. The extra attention given to incoming freshman with a special summer orientation and support for freshman in the academic program by the librarian and other staff members during freshman seminar reflect the faculty's commitment to promoting the well-being of all students. The nurse makes extra efforts to ensure all faculty members know which students need a little extra "TLC." Some student work but no exemplars, is prominently displayed in classrooms. Recognizing student work and success increases student pride, the motivation to learn, and creates a positive culture within the school. *(teachers, self-study, students, school administrative team)*

The climate of the school is safe, positive, respectful, and supportive, resulting in a sense of pride and ownership. All members of the school community, including administrators, teachers, staff, students, and parents demonstrate tremendous pride in their school. This pride and sense of ownership reflect the positive school climate at Norwood Senior High School. The student survey in 2008 that indicated only 60% of students as feeling safe at school was completed shortly after several bomb threats and a lock-down drill. Many students and staff members who were interviewed reported they feel safe at school, and many expressed surprise at the 60% reported in the survey. Parents also report they feel the school is safe. Students report their teachers and the administration support them. The majority of the students is able to identify an adult member of the school community that they could comfortably go to in cases of academic, social, or behavior concerns. There is a discrepancy between the perception of safety expressed during the student survey and the current perception of safety. *(self-study, students, teachers, school leadership team)*

The school committee supports the implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning. The school committee has supported the development and implementation of the school's mission as well as the expectations for student learning. School committee members played an active role in securing community support and funding for the new high school. However, only 28.6% of the school committee reports the mission has guided their decisions. School committee members reflect on the importance of the Four A's and their positive impact on the school culture, but they report that they do not micromanage the schools. Some educational staff and some community members believe, however, the committee members have micromanaged the schools by becoming involved in building-based practices such as the summer reading requirements. Despite the question of the school committee's involvement in school procedures, its members support the school leadership team and have granted them sufficient autonomy in their effort to improve student learning. *(Endicott Study, self-study, school committee, school leadership team)*

Commendations:

1. The principal's dedication to the students, school, and community
2. The principal's leadership style, visibility, commitment to school excellence, and his positive relationships with members of the school community

3. An authentic team approach of the administrators in moving toward enhancing the academic climate of Norwood Senior High School
4. The development of a shared vision for Norwood Senior High School as a truly comprehensive high school
5. The various leadership roles assumed by teachers
6. The safe, respectful, and positive learning environment
7. The meaningful roles teachers, students, and parents have in the decision-making process
8. The administration for fostering a collegial and supportive professional work environment
9. The level of shared pride in the school held by adults and students

Recommendations:

1. Report on the impact of grouping practices on student self-perceptions and academic performance as one part of a process of assessing the effectiveness of four levels of course offerings for a student population, approximately 80% of which will be going on to four-year colleges
2. Provide professional collaborative time for teachers to meet within and across departments in order to address common planning time collaborative examination of student work, and curriculum revision
3. Provide time and support for teachers and departments to develop and implement interdisciplinary courses
4. Implement a professional development program that focuses on differentiated instruction as a means to address the varied students needs in the heterogeneous classroom
5. Develop and implement a formal advisory program

6

SUPPORT STANDARD

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Student learning and well-being are dependent upon adequate and appropriate support programs and services. The school is responsible for providing an effective range of integrated resources to enhance and improve student learning and well-being and to support the school's mission and expectations.

All Student Support Services

1. The school's student support services shall be consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
2. The school shall allocate resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's expectations for student learning.
3. Student support personnel shall enhance student learning by interacting and working cooperatively with professional and other staff and by utilizing community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students.
4. All student support services shall be regularly evaluated and revised to support improved student learning.
5. There shall be a system for effective and ongoing communication with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel, designed to keep them informed about the types of available student support services and identified student needs.

6. Student records, including health and immunization records, shall be maintained in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal and state law.
7. There shall be sufficient certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide effective counseling, health, special education, and library media services.

Guidance Services

8. The school shall provide a full range of comprehensive guidance services, including:
 - individual and group meetings with counseling personnel;
 - personal, career, and college counseling;
 - student course selection assistance;
 - collaborative outreach to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers;
 - appropriate support in the delivery of special education services for students.

Health Services

9. The school's health services shall provide:
 - preventive health services and direct intervention services;
 - appropriate referrals;
 - mandated services;
 - emergency response mechanisms;
 - ongoing student health assessments.

Conclusions:

The Norwood Senior High School Student Support Services are aligned with the school's mission and expectations for student learning. Student support services accomplish this through the freshman seminar, class meetings and individual sessions with seniors, scheduling, addressing transitional issues between the middle and high school through early intervention and utilizing the warning reports for at risk students. In addition the dean system at the school assists with the transition especially for at risk students. The library media specialists have implemented a library orientation and information literacy program with the freshman class this year. These services are providing students with opportunities to create informed decisions surrounding academics, arts, athletics, and activities in their lives and are providing students with opportunities to find success in post-secondary endeavors. *(self-study, observations, teachers, students, parents)*

However, Norwood Senior High School's allocation of resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's expectations for student learning is currently not sufficient to support the school's stated expectations. Recent budget cuts in information resources and an unfilled position in special education services create some problems. Budget cuts limit the library in enhancing its collection and maintaining current periodicals which support curriculum. In addition, the unfilled position in special education has an impact on the service delivery of individualized education plans as mandated by local, state, and federal laws. Insufficient staffing and materials budget problems can inhibit student academic growth. *(teachers, library personnel, self-study)*

To address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students, school support personnel interact and work cooperatively with faculty and other staff members as well as connect students with appropriate community resources. However, seventy-five students' special services needs are currently being provided in out-of-district placements, and the student support services personnel are investigating opportunities to implement programs that will serve a number of these students within the high school. The high school currently has limited programs, but it is investigating options and inclusive learning model programs that will provide necessary services to these students in the district. Moreover, the district has assumed responsibility for the transportation of special needs students, which will enable the district to recover some out-of-district costs. Inclusion support for some of the classrooms has been hampered by the unfilled position in the department. The guidance department utilizes a variety of community resources, including ongoing college fairs and military representatives. In addition, the guidance department, working collaboratively with Norwood Hospital, NSHS Health Services, and the health and physical education department, coordinate a career fair in the health related field. The NSHS Library connects with the public library to provide peer literacy tutoring training to seniors, enhancing the school's contribution to the community. These concerted efforts provide much of the needed support so students may achieve academic, social, and civic expectations in the mission and connect them to their community. *(self-study, students, library personnel, staff, parents, standards committee, central office leadership team)*

Norwood Senior High School uses a variety of ways to evaluate the student support services provided at the school. With the exception of guidance, most evaluations are informal.

The guidance department has developed an end of seminar survey to assess and revise the freshman seminar. There is a review of academic data through the student management system (IPASS) in which a review is undertaken of students' middle school academic achievement. This is used to determine placement in early intervention programs such as the peer tutoring programs. The school counselors review data use in Naviance to track student progress in the college search process. Survey results on guidance related questions indicate that students, staff, and parents feel confident that in the career, academic and the social-emotional arena the school counselors are competent professionals. As a result of use and responses to this program, it will be expanded into the sophomore year. The sophomore year will focus on career assessment and exploration. Health services are evaluated using the Job Performance Evaluation Guidelines for School Nurses. The district-wide nursing coordinator evaluates nurses per their contractual agreement. Eighty-five percent of parents reports comfort with the school's procedure in handling student illnesses. The special education department meets with the special education parent advisory council (SEPAC) to solicit feedback. The director of student services supervises and evaluates staffing and the service delivery of programs that are based on audits and program reviews conducted by the department of elementary and secondary education. The most recent review was completed in 2008. No formal evaluations of the library personnel and information service and materials are in use. An evaluative rubric endorsed by the Massachusetts Association of School Librarians is available but has not been utilized. The evaluation of student support staff members is based on the criteria articulated in their bargaining contract. A formal and consistent evaluation of support services' efforts is needed to support and enhance student learning. (*teachers, library personnel, self-study, Endicott Survey*)

There is a system for ongoing communication with students, parents, and school personnel to keep them informed of the types of student support services and identified student needs. Student-produced TV announcements are broadcast every morning and evening. Administrators utilize the Connect ED phone system to reach parents about events and issues of importance. Additionally, information is communicated through the school website, program of studies, registration materials for new students, and policies on release of student information, testing, and health related issues such as H1N1 flu. The Naviance program provides information by mass e-mail or on an individual basis, and the guidance department utilizes phone and e-mail on a daily basis as a preferred means to respond to parental inquiries. Faculty and staff members are required to check their e-mail daily and to check their mailboxes located in the main office for messages twice a day. In the area of special education, student learning profiles and accommodations based on the individualized education plans (IEPs) are disseminated to regular education faculty members during the first weeks of school as are regular education 504 plans, which are disseminated by the guidance staff. These communication vehicles maintain an informed school community and support a positive school climate and improved student learning. (*self-study, teachers, parents, school support staff*).

Student records, including health and immunization records, for the most part, are maintained in a confidential and secure manner. The transcript of Norwood Senior High School students who withdraw from or transfer to another school have been historically destroyed after seven years. Former students who did not graduate from Norwood Senior High School are not able to exercise their legal right to retrieve their academic transcript records. (*school support staff, guidance, school nurse*)

In most service areas, Norwood Senior High School's level of staffing is sufficient to provide adequate services in counseling and health. However, 52.5% of staff members and 62.2% of parents report there are sufficient support services to meet the needs of students in health services. The addition of a half-time librarian has improved the accessibility of information services provided for the school. However, there is a concern that some students may not be receiving all of the support they need as a result of an unfilled position within the special education department. (*Endicott Survey, self-study, health services, teachers, students*)

School counselors work closely to meet the academic, career planning, and social-emotional issues and concerns of all students. These include transitional meetings with the middle school counselors and sharing of information between the counselors and the deans. School counselors are also involved with scheduling, parent/student meetings, freshman seminars, individual meetings, class presentations, evening presentations, financial aid planning, and college planning. Most recently, counselors are developing and monitoring the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education mandated Educational Proficiency plans (EPPS) based on individual student MCAS results. The interactions with faculty members, administrators, other support staff, the participation at special education team meetings, consultations with the deans, the adjustment counselor, the special education staff, and the alternative school staff provide specific ways to identify at risk students. The school counselors use the Naviance program as the primary post-secondary exploration tool for juniors, seniors, and parents to assist in the college/post-secondary process. This program, which is in its second year, is expanding to include a comprehensive career assessment tool for all of the school's sophomores. The delivery of services provided by the guidance department assists students to develop the tools to make informed decisions, develop coping and critical thinking skills, and deal with adversity and opportunities throughout their high school experience and beyond. (*self-study, parents, teachers, staff, student shadowing*)

The health services program provides necessary services to meet the needs of students and to respond to emergency situations. Health services monitor all updates on students' immunizations and review physicals for students participating in sports. Health services work in conjunction with the physical education and health program to provide a health fair for the students. There is a collaborative relationship with Norwood Hospital. Referrals to health services are made in a number of ways: self-referral, teachers, guidance counselors, adjustment counselor, and administrators. They provide mandated services such as vision and hearing testing in the ninth grade and height and weight measurements in grade 10. Grade 10 students are also required to have an updated physical through their own primary care physician. The nurse is available to respond to medical emergencies and will access emergency response services (911) through the Norwood Fire Department. When there is no coverage in the health office, students are instructed to return to class or, in an emergency, report to the main office. In three areas of the high school, there are automated external defibrillators (AEDs). Health services assist in senior CPR classes. The health service room is open from 7:25am to 2:35pm. Nurses track the number of students who access their services daily which is then logged into their computerized system. Nurses respond to medical emergencies on school grounds an average of about fifty times a year, which may result in the nurse accessing "911" when conditions require it. Approximately 40 students a day seek out health services. (*self-study, parents, students, teachers*)

With the absence of school-issued communication devices to ensure the health and safety of faculty, staff, and students, there is a concern when staff members cannot access telephone or intercom system. The nurses will make recommendations for referrals to a variety of support programs available at Norwood hospital such as young mothers' classes, smoking cessation, and nutrition and weight loss programs. With the exception of the absence of school-issued communication devices, the practices and services employed by health services and its staff provide a supportive climate that is conducive to improved student learning. (*teachers, school nurses, self-study*)

The library media center is becoming integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program. School leadership has recognized the need for additional certified library support and have hired another half-time librarian. The librarians have implemented a freshman orientation program and begun the process of inducting students into the K-12 Library Curriculum. Plans for the new high school will provide a more up-to-date facility for library services and programs and should lead to further integration of library services into the curriculum and instruction. Although some teachers use the library's computers and print resources for instructional purposes, the library media specialist is not currently being fully utilized. The professional knowledge and skills offered by library media specialists could enhance the whole school's curriculum and instruction to support and enhance student learning. (*library personnel, school leadership team, teachers, students, self-study*)

While the library personnel are knowledgeable and approachable regarding curriculum, they are not currently able to purchase materials to support the curriculum. The materials budget directly affects the library's ability to offer a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services to assist students and teachers to improve teaching and learning. The American Association of School Librarians recommends a 20:1 ratio for materials to high school students. Though the current collection is well cared for, current, and relevant, it is not sufficient for the number of students in the building. As a result, several departments are developing their own libraries of materials. These supplemental libraries are not accessible to all members of the faculty as they are not cataloged. Use of these small libraries further reduces opportunities for collaboration between the librarians and teachers. The library budget has been severely reduced this year, inhibiting the library's ability to maintain current periodicals or acquire new materials used to enhance teaching and enrich student learning. (*self-study, teachers, library personnel, school leadership team*)

Faculty members, support staff members, and students have regular access to library information services, facilities, and programs before, during, and after the school day. Teachers are able to schedule time and hold classes in the library media center. The new school building will provide better access and enhance 21st century learning. (*self-study, students, teachers, school leadership team*)

A comprehensive library curriculum has been adopted by the school district, and as the library program continues to develop, students and faculty members will be able to use various school and information resource technologies to develop strong inquiry skills. The librarian conducts an orientation to the library and its resources to all freshmen. In their junior and senior

years, students are required to write a research paper and are given more in-depth instruction on the use of the on-line research databases and other library materials. However, there is currently no orientation procedure in place for students who transfer into the school, and space limits the number of students who can be trained in on-line research skills. With limited access to computers for research training, full integration of library information services to support efforts of teachers and students is inhibited. (*student work, self-study, teachers, students, library personnel*)

Policies are in place for the selection and removal of information resources and the use of technologies and the Internet. The policy for selection and removal of materials is delineated in the school committee policy. Appropriate technology use, including the Internet, is outlined in the school committee policy and made available in the student handbook. These policies ensure that students be informed and skilled in meeting the demands of an information-based, technology-driven world. (*self-study, teachers, librarian, student handbook*)

The school provides special education services related to the identification, monitoring and referral of students in accordance with local, state, and federal laws. The guidance department is the gateway for faculty members and parents to determine if a referral for an initial evaluation is warranted. Once a decision is made to make a referral, the school guidance counselor will attend the weekly intake meeting (WIN) which is composed of all the special educators in the high school. This is a standing weekly meeting. The counselor will present the concern, a history of the student, and current interventions. New teachers comment that they were unsure of the process to make a referral for a student. A review of the district student services webpage, the high school webpage, student handbook, program of studies, and faculty manual do not address the process to access an initial evaluation screening. Teachers note that within the first weeks of school they receive the service delivery grids for those students who have individualized education plans (IEPs) in their classes. A student who has an IEP receives service delivery requirements primarily through the resource room services model in which the academic core courses are taught by a special educator or through the learning center services model where academic support is provided to those students to supplement their mainstream courses. Both the resource and learning center educators are functioning collaboratively with regular education teachers to move to a more inclusive model within the areas of math and English. Additional services include speech and language services and in the Therapeutic Academic Support Class (TASC). There is also one full-time adjustment counselor at the school. The adjustment counselor collaborates with the guidance department, teachers, and deans. This counselor provides the therapeutic component of a student's service plan, including the New TASC program. Although the variety of special education services available at this time is comprehensive and meets students' needs, a formal referral process is not in place, causing some confusion as the process is unclear to some constituencies who must access these services. (*teachers, staff, self-study, guidance, support staff*)

Commendations:

1. Community outreach by student support services, integrating the community into student life through peer literacy tutoring, haunted house, Friendship Club, and SADD
2. The hiring of an additional half-time media specialist
3. The development and implementation of an information literacy program for all freshman
4. The formal partnerships with community agencies and services to further enhance student support services
5. Effective communication to the community through a media program
6. The freshman seminar and transition support program to address at risk students

Recommendations:

1. Ensure sufficient allocation of resources in order to guarantee support services for student learning
2. Formally evaluate support service personnel using appropriate assessment tools
3. Increase the use of the media center by teachers and students to ensure it meets the instructional needs of teachers and the learning needs of students
4. Increase the budgetary allocation to update and increase the print and non-print collections in the media center
5. Comply with the law regarding the retention and storage of student records
6. Provide school-issued communication systems for school first responder personnel
7. Communicate the special needs referral process to faculty and parents

7

SUPPORT STANDARD

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Active community and parent participation, facilities which support school programs and services, and dependable and adequate funding are necessary for the school to achieve its mission and expectations for student learning.

1. The school shall engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and shall encourage their participation in school programs and parent support groups.
2. The school shall foster productive business/community/higher education partnerships that support student learning.
3. The school site and plant shall support and enhance all aspects of the educational program and the support services for student learning.
4. The physical plant and facilities shall meet all applicable federal and state laws and shall be in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.
5. Equipment shall be adequate, properly maintained, catalogued, and replaced when appropriate.
6. A planned and adequately funded program of building and site management shall ensure the appropriate maintenance, repair, and cleanliness of the school plant.
7. There shall be ongoing planning to address future programs, enrollment changes, staffing, facility, and technology needs as well as capital improvements.
8. The community and the district's governing body shall ensure an adequate and dependable source of revenue to provide and maintain appropriate school programs, personnel, services, facilities, equipment, technological support, materials, and supplies for student learning.
9. Faculty and building administrators shall have active involvement in the budgetary process, including its development and implementation.

Conclusions:

Norwood Senior High School effectively creates a supportive and collaborative environment for parents/guardians and families by encouraging involvement, participation, dialogue, and investment. Parents/guardians are engaged as partners in their children's education in a variety of ways. "Informational Night" invites parents of incoming students to familiarize themselves with the school environment and policies and to interact with administrators and faculty. Parents are invited to "Open House" and have the opportunity to follow their child's schedule and be made aware of all class requirements. The Connect Ed system enables the school to send messages via telephone and e-mail. Daily notices are available on the NSHS website. Faculty members have their own websites through which parents can ascertain what is happening in their child's classes. Parent/teacher conferences and site-based and governance councils offer many opportunities for parents, students, and teachers to actively participate in school activities. By encouraging involvement, participation, dialogue, and community investment, NSHS has effectively created a supportive and collaborative environment for parents/guardians and families of NSHS students. (*self-study, teachers, student shadowing, parents, student handbook*)

Norwood Senior High School adequately fosters productive business/community/higher education partnerships that support student learning. These relationships foster career awareness, student learning, and curricular development for the students and provide the community with an opportunity to participate in the advancement of NSHS students. NSHS is a member of the Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training and the Blue Hills Local Partnership, allowing students to explore career fields and to experience real-world learning. The NSHS School to Careers Partnership provides career-related learning experiences for NSHS students. The director of this program works with local businesses to create opportunities for student learning and to connect students to these opportunities. Partnerships with teacher education programs have been established to engage student teachers and interns in the high school. Students are encouraged to participate in activities that effectively link knowledge gained in the classroom with real-world, authentic applications. The commitment to communication and cooperation with resources of the community has a direct benefit for NSHS students in providing a wide variety of quality learning opportunities. (*self-study, teachers, students, parents, school leadership team*)

The current site and plant of Norwood Senior High School do not adequately support and enhance all aspects of the educational program and the support services for student learning. Although NSHS provides a variety of classroom sizes, these spaces are inadequate in terms of both size and function. The cafeteria is undersized for the current school population. Due to a significant increase in student population, a number of the non-traditional classroom areas have been renovated as classrooms and/or teacher offices. Because of the construction of a new high school facility, one of the existing gymnasiums was demolished to provide space for the ongoing construction. With the loss of this gymnasium, many physical education classes must be held off school grounds. Physical education staff members expressed concern that they have no means to communicate with the office in the event of an injury or accident. The current site cannot adequately accommodate a number of activities such as school-wide assemblies, athletic events, choral/drama productions, and science lab activities. The limitations of the current building

prevent NSHS from enhancing all aspects of student learning, but the completion of the new building project will have increased opportunities to provide a positive atmosphere for learning. Moreover, all concerns of the current building identified by The Commission on Public Secondary Schools will be resolved upon completion of the new high school. *(facility tour, self-study, teachers, students, parents, school committee)*

The physical plant and facilities of Norwood Senior High School meet all federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations. A maintenance manual has been created to ensure that adequate supplies, materials, equipment, and personnel are provided to make the plant safe, healthy, clean, and well-maintained. In addition, School Dude, an online work order program, is used to process claims and/or work orders. All staff members have access to this program with which any safety or repair issues from any classroom, office, or common area can be reported. NSHS has no violations of code, and all permits and occupancy certificates are up-to-date. While adequate cleaning materials are available for the cleaning and maintenance of the building, adequate hardware for a number of doors is lacking to implement an effective lockdown, and a safety issue exists as some of the external doors cannot be locked during the school day. Moreover, the public address system cannot be heard in some areas of the building. Some windows cannot be opened properly, and many classroom phones do not work. Also, Fire Alarm & Evacuation Procedure posters are not readily visible in some classrooms. School maintenance problems are acted upon in a timely manner. Equipment that is non-functioning is removed, repaired, or replaced by the maintenance department. Although some structural issues exist, the building is kept in the best condition possible. The district supervisor of buildings and grounds is responsible for the planning and oversight of the custodial and maintenance department. He is responsible for the purchase and distribution of adequate supplies and materials, as well as the hiring, training, and supervision of the personnel necessary to keep the facility clean, well-maintained, and in good repair. He is also charged with prioritizing the requests from the building principals for capital improvement monies. His prioritized list is presented to the school committee for approval and funding. The supervisor of buildings and grounds has made great strides to create a “green” environment at NSHS. The recycling efforts throughout the building have cut trash-removal costs in half. Despite the age and condition of the existing building, which pre-dates modern accessibility guidelines, the building does provide handicapped accessibility throughout; however, in the event of an emergency, the inability to guarantee a total lockdown and a lack of a functioning communication system throughout the entire building are of concern. *(facility tour, maintenance personnel, self-study)*

Norwood Senior High School provides and properly maintains catalogues and replaces equipment necessary to meet the instructional and facility needs. While instructional classroom equipment is available throughout the existing high school, administrators, faculty members, and students are looking to a new building with new and more contemporary equipment and furnishings. Equipment maintenance and cataloging is monitored by department chairs. Regular maintenance and replacement schedules are in place for all furniture and equipment, both instructional and administrative, in compliance with the district plan in support of the educational process to promote teaching and learning. *(self-study, facility tour, teachers)*

A planned and adequately funded program of building and site management at Norwood Senior High School ensures the maintenance, repair, and cleanliness of the school plant. A manager/supervisor of facilities and maintenance oversees the entire planning and supervision of the maintenance program. A formal plan is in place for the regular maintenance and repair of facilities. *The NPS Custodial Care Program – Cleaning and Procedures Guidelines* is the custodial staff's manual for all cleaning operations. Adequate personnel are in place to ensure that all equipment and facilities are well maintained. The annual maintenance budget is determined after a comprehensive and interactive process has been completed between the school department and the finance committee. Members of the school committee express satisfaction with building maintenance. Through the efforts of the NSHS custodial/maintenance staff, the current building and facilities are kept in the absolute best possible condition. (*NPS Custodial Care Program – Cleaning and Procedures Guidelines, self-study, teachers, building maintenance, panel discussion*)

There is ongoing planning to address future programs, enrollment changes, staffing, facility, technology needs, and capital improvements at Norwood Senior High School. The District Improvement Plan of 2004 – 2009 was designed jointly by the school committee, teachers, administrators, parents/guardians, students, and other community members. Norwood Public Schools is completing this five-year, five-million-dollar technology plan. Infrastructure improvements included wiring classrooms, improving Internet access, computer hardware upgrades, and the creation of several computer labs. Some departments – such as TV, fine arts, and foreign languages – augmented the five-year plan through fundraising and grants. A formal five-year technology plan was implemented to address the needs, costs, and strategic purchasing. This technology plan is implemented and reviewed on an annual basis. The school district's five-year improvement plan addresses student achievement, school climate/safety, leadership and administration, facilities, and fiscal issues. While there is an adequate long-range plan in place to address programs, staffing, facility needs, and capital improvements, NSHS lacks a short-term plan to transition into its new building the curricular and program issues that affect student learning. (*self-study, teachers, facility tour, central office leadership team, school leadership team*)

With the current fiscal constraints, the community and the district's governing body attempts to ensure Norwood Senior High School of an adequate and dependable source of revenue to provide and maintain appropriate school programs, personnel services, facilities, equipment, technological support, materials, and supplies for student learning. All department chairs submit a budget to the school principal, who works with them on revisions based on available funding. Teachers are also involved in this process. The school uses data about student learning needs to make budgetary decisions. Departments use assessment data generated by the staff to make decisions about materials purchased for instruction. Based on standardized testing (MCAS), an additional staff member was hired and a remediation course for students who did not pass the MCAS was offered. Additional personnel in student support services are provided when IEPs dictate except for the one that has not yet been replaced. Department chairs follow the new course process outlined in the *Faculty Manual* when additional courses are needed. The Norwood School Committee holds public forums to solicit input from parents/guardians and the general community relative to the annual budget. Yearly budget planning solicits feedback in the early stages in order to determine school needs and to generate broad-

based community support. This process attempts to balance the needs for adequate program support with the needs for responsible fiscal restraints. Broad-based communication like Connect Ed is used to create awareness of the budget process. School committee meetings are broadcast live. The public forum segments of these meetings are dedicated exclusively to garnering community input. Principals throughout the school district are heavily involved in this process, working with central administration to create a final budget for the district. School and district administrators, with the district's governing body, provide authoritative and proactive leadership in preparing, presenting, and generating support for the passage of the annual budget for NSHS. Because of this proactive process, yearly budgets are usually passed with a substantial amount of support from the community. Since 1999, the annual meeting of the Town of Norwood has increased its funding for NSHS and the entire Norwood Public Schools System, which is a testament to the town's support for its young people. (*faculty manual, self-study, teachers, parents, school leadership team, school committee*)

Commendations:

1. Norwood Senior High School promotes and includes parents/guardians in their children's education
2. The tireless efforts of the building and grounds staff members who make the most of available resources and keep the existing facility in the best possible condition
3. The building and ground supervisor's efforts to recycle and provide a greener environment at NSHS
4. The \$5 million technology plan
5. The active leadership of the principal and central office administrators in budgetary processes
6. The school community support and efforts to fund and construct a new high school project
7. The partnerships and programs with local businesses, community agencies, and higher education institutions

Recommendations:

1. Resolve the safety issues of unlocked external doors during the school day
2. Provide a sufficient number of working phones and repair windows and other hardware in the current facility
3. Provide a means to communicate with all areas of the building in emergency situations

4. Make the Fire Alarm & Evacuation Procedure posters larger and display them in all classrooms
5. Provide adequate communication devices to ensure safety for physical education classes that take place outdoors

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

Since it is in the best interest of the students that the citizens of the district become aware of the strengths and limitations of the school and suggested recommendations for improvement, the 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 of Norwood Senior High School submit routine Two- and Five-Year Progress Reports documenting the current status of all evaluation report recommendations, with particular detail provided for any recommendation which may have been rejected or those items on which no action has been taken. In addition, responses must be detailed on all recommendations highlighted by the 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 (60) days 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 CPSS Standards. The Commission's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix on page fifty-eight. 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 team greatly appreciates the excellent hospitality demonstrated by the entire Norwood Senior High School community. Its conscientious efforts in preparing the self-study and its openness and honesty in responding to the team's questions are a significant testament to the personnel at Norwood Senior High School.

**New England Association of Schools and Colleges
Norwood Senior High School
Norwood, Massachusetts
Visiting Committee Directory
October 4-7, 2009**

Stephen E. Mitchell, Chair
Retired Principal
Chepachet, RI 02814

Paul Mangelinkx
Assistant Chair
Chatham High School
Chatham, MA 02633

Andrea Ange
Campbell High School
Litchfield, NH 02052

Michael C. Belanger
North High School
Worcester, MA 01664

Tim Connor
Minnechaug Regional HS
Wilbraham, MA 01095

Albert Elwood
North Attleboro HS
North Attleboro, MA 02760

Blake Gilson
Beverly HS
Beverly, MA 01915

Nancy Haff
Nashoba Regional HS
Bolton, MA 01740

Kenneth Jenks
Dennis-Yarmouth Regional HS
South Yarmouth, MA 02664

Sara Joy
North Middlesex Regional HS
Townsend, MA 01469

Kelly Kenny
Mansfield High School
Mansfield, MA 02048

Dr. Susan King
Rockport Public Schools
Rockport, MA 01966

Alvin Kolodziejski
Falmouth High School
Falmouth, MA 02540

Mark Morrison
Northampton High School
Northampton, MA 01060

Robert Quist
Salem High School
Salem, MA 01970

Christine Rebelo
City on a Hill Charter
Roxbury, MA 02119

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

Commission on Public Secondary Schools

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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
- 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
- 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
- identification by the state as an underperforming school
- takeover by the state
- inordinate user fees