

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

**Commission on Public Schools**



**Committee on Public Secondary Schools**

**Report of the Visiting Team for  
Berlin High School**

Berlin, CT

October 28, 2018 - October 31, 2018

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, Assistant Chair  
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# STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

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

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

# **STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION**

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

## **Teaching and Learning Standards**

### **Core Values and Beliefs About Learning**

#### **Curriculum**

#### **Instruction**

#### **Assessment of and for Student Learning**

## **Support Standards**

### **School Culture and Leadership**

### **School Resources for Learning**

### **Community Resources for Learning**

# CORE VALUES, BELIEFS, AND LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

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## Teaching and Learning Standard

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

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

# CURRICULUM

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## Teaching and Learning Standard

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

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

# INSTRUCTION

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## Teaching and Learning Standard

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

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

# ASSESSMENT OF AND FOR STUDENT LEARNING

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## Teaching and Learning Standard

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

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

core values and beliefs about learning.



# SCHOOL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

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## Support Standard

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

1. The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.
2. The school is equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
3. There is a formal, on-going program(s) or process(es) through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.
4. In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff:
  - engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning
  - use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices
  - dedicate formal time to implement professional development
  - apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
5. School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning.
6. The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.
7. Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students.
8. The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.
9. Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.
10. Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning.
11. The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

12. The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school.

# SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

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## Support Standard

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

1. The school has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
2. The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services.
3. Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.
4. School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - deliver a written, developmental program
  - meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling
  - engage in individual and group meetings with all students
  - deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers
  - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.
5. The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - provide preventative health services and direct intervention services
  - use an appropriate referral process
  - conduct ongoing student health assessments
  - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.
6. Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum
  - provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum
  - ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school
  - are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning
  - conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.
7. Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations
  - provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students

- perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

# COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

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## Support Standard

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

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

# School and Community Summary

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## School and Community Summary

Berlin, Connecticut is a suburban town located at the geographical center of Connecticut, twelve miles south of Hartford. Berlin is comprised of Berlin, Kensington, and East Berlin and was settled in 1785. The town is bordered by New Britain, Southington, Meriden, Middletown, Cromwell, Rocky Hill, and Newington between Lamentation Mountain and Ragged Mountain.

The population of Berlin is approximately 20,486 according to the 2015 census estimate. According to the 2010 census, the population of Berlin is approximately 95 percent white, 3 percent Hispanic, 1 percent black, and 1 percent other. Approximately 2.5 percent of the student population are English language learners.

Berlin's median income of \$93,369 ranks above the state average of \$71,346. The 2016 unemployment rate for the town was 3.2 percent while the rate for the state was 4.4 percent. Residents with income below the poverty level is 3.8 percent, significantly below the state average. In the 2015-2016 school year, 13.5 percent of the student population qualified for free or reduced lunch.

The town has three elementary schools (K-5): Mary E. Griswold, serving 490 students; Richard D. Hubbard, serving 213 students; and Emma Hart Willard, serving 483 students. There is one middle school (6-8), Catherine M. McGee Middle School, serving 715 students, and one high school (9-12), Berlin High School, serving 883 students. The town's total enrollment is 2,784 students. Enrollment has declined approximately 2 percent in each of the last ten years. Berlin High School is located at 139 Patterson Way, approximately two miles from the Town Hall and public library and within walking distance of Willard and McGee. The town is also home to The Mooreland Hill School, serving grades K-9, and St. Paul Catholic School, which serves pre-K-8.

Berlin High School is a four-year comprehensive school accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges offering curricular and co-curricular programs to just under 900 students. Two hundred thirty-eight (238) students graduated in 2016. Berlin participates in the regional open choice program, with 43 students from Hartford. Enrollment at Berlin High School has declined from 1,063 students in 2007 to 892 in 2016. There are three full-time administrators, one athletic director, thirteen paraprofessionals, two nurses, twelve support staff, nine custodians, and nine food service personnel. Berlin High School has two security employees (including one full-time and one part-time) and one resource officer. The faculty consists of 98 certified staff members, 93 percent of whom hold advanced degrees.

The 2015-2016 expenditure per pupil in Berlin was \$15,533, while the 2015-2016 average state expenditure per pupil is \$17,085. Of the proposed budget for 2016-2017, 55.7 percent, or \$46,682,272, represents the portion of the town budget spent on education. The town contributes 85 percent, while state/federal funds comprise 15 percent of the education budget.

The overall attendance rate in 2015-2016 for Berlin High School was 95.4 percent for female students and 95.6 percent of male students. The overall attendance rate in 2015-2016 for general education students was 96.1 percent; for students with disabilities, it was 90.8 percent. The rate of chronic absenteeism in 2015-2016 was 5.6 percent district-wide, below the state average of 11.5 percent. The annual dropout rate averages 1 percent. Berlin High School currently has 90 students with IEPs, 55 with a Section 504 Plan, twelve in an alternative setting and seven that are out-placed, which represents 12.8 percent of the population. According to 2015-2016 data, the attendance rate of teachers, excluding professional days and those on leave, averages 95 percent. The academic year for students is 183 days, and for staff it is 188 days.

All students are required to take 4.0 credits of English, 4.0 credits of mathematics, 4.0 credits of science, 3.5 credits of social studies (including one each of US history and civics), and 2.0 credits of physical education (including .25 of health). Students must also earn 0.5 credits in personal finance (beginning with the class of 2020), 1.0 credit for the senior capstone project, as well as eight additional elective credits. Elective courses are offered across a variety of content areas including visual arts, music, technology, and family and consumer sciences, including culinary education and childcare. Courses in business and accounting are also offered. Students must be enrolled in a minimum of seven credits each year for four years.

Berlin High School provides students the opportunity to achieve college credits while still in high school through three program options. Advanced Placement (AP) offerings include 17 courses approved by the College Board, and the UConn Early College Experience (ECE) offers eleven courses taught by Berlin High School teachers who are certified as adjunct professors. College credits are also available for two courses through the Tunxis Community College Career Pathways (CCP) program. Students can apply for a partnership program with Tunxis Community College, Middlesex Community College, and Wesleyan University to take one class per semester free of charge. Through a number of school-to-business and school-to-community partnerships, students have the opportunity to work with DECA, Junior Achievement, and other established organizations and job shadowing opportunities. A multitude of extracurricular opportunities are available for every Berlin High School student. Berlin High School achieved the distinction of being recognized on the 7th Annual AP District Honor Roll in 2016.

Berlin High School publishes its honor roll after the close of each quarter. The criteria for high honors is a 91 percent average with no grade below 85 percent, while honors requires an 85 percent average with no grade below 80 percent. The class of 2016 had 23 students earn an academic honors citation by taking the most rigorous coursework available in at least two core subject areas with a minimum of an 88 percent average. Community service citations were awarded to 73 graduates that performed over 120 service hours, and 74 graduates earned the President's Award with a cumulative GPA of 90 or higher. Berlin High School hosts a chapter of the National Honor Society and elects students based on scholarship, character, leadership, and service; 58 seniors were members in 2015-2016.

Seventy-eight percent of graduates from the class of 2016 indicated plans to attend a four-year college, 14.9 percent planned to attend a two-year college, 4.7 percent planned to enter the workforce, and 0.8 percent planned to join the military. The graduation rate is 94.5 percent, above the state average of 87 percent.

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

### **Core Values and Beliefs about Learning**

All members of the Berlin High School community will engage collaboratively to ensure rigorous and relevant learning to cultivate transferable skills toward success in a global society.

### **Academic Expectations**

- EXPLORE diverse perspectives and evaluate sources to express thoughtful judgments
- THINK flexibly, take responsible risks, and listen with understanding and empathy
- SEEK to solve problems creatively by developing solutions, findings, prototypes, performances, or media
- BECOME self-directed, self-reflective, independent learners

### **Social and Civic Expectations**

- EXHIBIT personal, community, and environmental health
- MODEL kind and ethical conduct
- CONTRIBUTE to a safe and supportive society that respects our differences

# Introduction

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## Introduction

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

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

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

### Teaching and Learning Standards

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of and for Student Learning

### Support of Teaching and Learning Standards

School Culture and Leadership

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning

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

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

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Berlin High School, a committee of 21 members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned 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 Berlin High School extended over a period of 24 school months from the fall of 2016 to October 2018. The visiting team was pleased to note that information from parent surveys and parent conversations were used in the self-study deliberations.



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

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

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

A visiting team of 15 members was assigned by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Berlin High School. The visiting team members spent four days in Berlin, 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 aligns with the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. Since the members of the visiting team represented classroom teachers, guidance counselors, library/media specialists, school administrators, and central office administrators, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Berlin High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 2.5 hours shadowing 15 students for a half day
- a total of 45 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

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

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

# Standard 1 Indicator 1

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## Conclusions

While the school community purposefully engages in a dynamic process informed by current research-based best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning, the process was inconsistently collaborative and inclusive of all stakeholders.

The current version of the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations was developed over a three-year time period and went through revisions in 2014 and 2016 prior to its most recent ratification by the board of education in September 2017. The process involved the collaboration of administrators, teachers, students, parents, and board members as well as the work of a school-wide vision committee in coming to its current form. Although an early version was primarily written solely by administrators, a principal's vision committee consisting of administrators, classroom teachers, and some special area specialists collaborated on subsequent revisions, including the current version. The process also included student input in its development. Students participated in advisory lessons centering on the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, one of which allowed students significant input into the final form of the social and civic expectations. Parents were introduced to a draft of the document at an open house and provided feedback as well. The document applied research-based concepts from Alan November, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Bena Kallick, Allison Zmuda, Heidi Hayes Jacobs, and TheodoreSizer.

When the dynamic process informed by current research-based best practices increases collaboration and inclusivity of all stakeholders, then the school will succeed in identifying and committing to its core values and beliefs about learning.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 1 Indicator 2

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## Conclusions

The school has somewhat challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies. By design, each expectation is informally defined by specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement.

In alignment with Common Core State Standards, the leadership team and the faculty revised the current learning expectations to more closely align with the essence of the 21st century learning expectations. These expectations are demonstrated by students in challenging, measurable ways through many courses and programs at the school such as Advanced Placement (AP) courses, capstone projects, a variety of technology classes, and extracurricular activities. Although 86 percent of students indicated they are familiar with the criteria which teachers use to assess their assignments, only 67.5 percent of the students and 68.4 percent of the staff agree that the school's learning expectations are challenging. Parents had a more favorable response to whether the school learning expectations are challenging with 83 percent of parents believing that they are.

There are seven 21st century learning expectations of which four are academic, two are social, and one is civic. The academic expectations ask students to, for example, solve problems, develop solutions, express thoughtful judgments, and become independent learners. The social and civic expectations encourage students to model ethical conduct, encourage diversity, and respect various viewpoints. The school developed five rubrics (reading, writing, problem-solving, communication, and social and civic) to provide criteria by which the seven learning expectations can be measured across the school. Teachers are in the process of using and calibrating these rubrics, in full or in part, to assess student success in meeting the expectations for learning. While some departments have clear connections to the language on the rubrics, other departments are experiencing challenges in applying the rubrics to their assessments. Analysis of student work indicated that some of the rubrics, and even some strands of rubrics, are being used much more often than the others in the assessment of assignments. The social and civic rubric is primarily being used by the physical education and health department and in the capstone experience. While not aligned one-for-one with the learning expectations, the school-wide rubrics identify targeted high levels for student achievement.

Although 86.1 percent of students agree that they are familiar with their school's core values and beliefs about learning, some students and teachers, along with members of school and district administration, have expressed confusion with how the current school-wide rubrics measure the current expectations for student learning and how both will align with newer, district-wide Berlin Learner Outcomes.

When the school-wide analytic rubrics fully align with the stated expectations for student learning, then the school will more effectively measure its challenging and measurable learning expectations for all students.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teachers
- parents
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 1 Indicator 3

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## Conclusions

The school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are extensively and actively reflected in the culture of the school, drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations.

Examples of where school culture reflects the core values and beliefs include the school's advisory program, capstone projects, and the many clubs in which students participate. Advisory classes have not only focused on the core values themselves, but also included a series of lessons regarding the same habits of mind that were used as research in the development of the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. Capstone projects can encompass every one of the core values. The Upbeat Club, Habitat for Humanity, and the Unified Leader Club are just a few of the many extracurricular activities that offer students an opportunity to reflect the core values outside of the classroom.

The curriculum, housed in the online platform Atlas Rubicon, gives teachers a platform to access, revise, and collaborate in developing and implementing curriculum within their disciplines. Teachers are beginning to see connections between the school-wide rubrics and the curriculum they teach. Teachers also make use of the online portal Schoology to share instructional content and lesson plans with colleagues and ultimately with their students as resources and assignments. As part of their instructional practice, teachers often ask students to collaborate, explore, and seek answers through purposeful grouping, modeling, inquiry, and the use of technology. The revised rubrics assisted the school in driving assessment practices in alignment with the core values and beliefs. In September 2017, all faculty were expected to use at least one of these rubrics to assess students, and in October, faculty members met in content-area groups to discuss and compare the new rubrics. The rubric generator located in the Google Suite and accessed through Schoology allows teachers to choose and cobble individual strands from multiple school-wide rubrics in order to tailor their assessment for specific assignments. In addition, some departments develop and employ local common assessments within their courses to measure student achievement against the core values and beliefs as well as making use of standardized assessments such as the SAT and AP tests.

In terms of policies, classroom time was reallocated in order to provide students with more opportunities to meet the school's 21st century learning expectations. In 2011, the schedule was changed from a seven-period rotation to an eight-period rotation, allowing for the expansion of course offerings and creating more opportunities for students. Civics and Junior English Seminar became full-year courses, and Personal Finance became a graduation requirement beginning with the Class of 2021. These policy changes have afforded students the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to achieve the core values. In addition, there are peer tutoring programs, multiple honor societies, TechXperts, and an after-school academy that provide extra help across many subjects for students who seek it. The faculty makes use of common planning time (CPT) in their schedule to collaborate and discuss instructional strategies, design assessments, and analyze data to create consistency across the content area and courses. However, due to some scheduling obstacles and the school's need for staff to cover classes for their colleagues when they are absent from school, CPT is often curtailed or unavailable. Programs and speakers from the Anti-Defamation League, Substance Abuse and Opioid Awareness, Chief the poet/motivational speaker, and Team Breakthru have addressed the social and civic expectations listed in the core values and beliefs about learning. Additionally, many clubs and organizations such as upBeat, Interact, National Honor Society, Unity, debate club, bike club, Unified Sports, and Habitat for Humanity further the implementation of the core values at BHS.

The 2012 redesign of the school building focused on technological improvement in the 21st century areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. As a result, many classrooms are equipped with computers, document cameras, graphing calculators, and scanners. Three-dimensional printers can be found in the technology education department and the library media center. There is also a state-of-the-art radio station, a TV studio, a virtual reality room, and many other cutting-edge educational settings in which students learn. All students are provided with a Chromebook for use in learning further demonstrating resource allocations that support the 21st century learning expectations. On the other hand, some resource allocations have decreased at the school in recent years. Due to budget constraints, some outside professional development opportunities for

teachers have been reduced, and one guidance counselor, two physical education teachers, and five department chairpeople have been eliminated from the staff.

As a result of the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations being actively reflected in the culture of the school, driving curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and guiding the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations, an effective learning community has been created at Berlin High School.

## **Sources of Evidence**

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

# Standard 1 Indicator 4

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## Conclusions

In some areas, the school regularly reviews and revises its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as on district and school community priorities.

Going forward, the school has a general plan to review and revise its core values and beliefs based on research, multiple data sources, and district and school priorities. Since 2014, the core values and beliefs went through three revisions, each more inclusive of stakeholders and comprehensive than the former. The faculty plans to use data derived from calibration of the school-wide rubrics in reviewing the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and 21st century learning expectations. The feedback provided by teachers and mid-year evaluations will be used to revise the rubrics as appropriate. At convocation on August 2018, district leaders introduced teachers to a new K-12 set of Berlin Learner Outcomes (BLOs) which connect to parts of the current core values and beliefs but appear disconnected from others. The BLOs have been codified in document form, and a video was shown to all staff to introduce the initiative. Another new district priority involves a commitment to the values of Purpose. Passion. Pride. These values are present on the school's website, and students and staff mentioned their meaningful, personal connection to Purpose. Passion. Pride. rather than the current core values. This newly adopted motto represents another new lens for learning which currently both complements and competes, in some ways, with the regular, planned revision of the school's core values and beliefs.

When stakeholders establish clear connections between the district's learning priorities and the school's core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations, then the school will be able to continue to effectively review and revise the core values and beliefs based on research and multiple data points.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- students
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 1 Commendations

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## Commendation

The dynamic process informed by current research-based practices used by the school to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning

## Commendation

The inclusion of parent and student input as well as teachers in the current version of the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations

## Commendation

The wide range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the academic, social, and civic expectations for learning

## Commendation

The calibration and use of rubrics across content areas and grades

## Commendation

The diversity and variety of courses and extracurricular opportunities that allow students to demonstrate the core values

## Commendation

The variety of assessments and opportunities provided to students to demonstrate learning

## Commendation

The school building which supports teaching and learning

## Commendation

The extensive STEM resources provided to students and staff to optimize learning

## Commendation

The increasing inclusiveness of stakeholders in the periodic review of the core values and beliefs

## **Commendation**

The creation of core values and beliefs, motto, vision and school-wide rubrics by high school sub-committees



# Standard 1 Recommendations

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## Recommendation

Include all stakeholders in ongoing revisions to the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations

## Recommendation

Establish clear alignment between and among the Berlin Learner Outcomes, the school motto, the core values, beliefs, 21st century learning expectations, and the school-wide rubrics

## Recommendation

Ensure sufficient time for faculty collaboration in implementing the core values and beliefs

## Recommendation

Investigate and implement optimal staffing numbers and organizational leadership models to maximize support of the core values and beliefs throughout the school

## Recommendation

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## Recommendation

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## Recommendation

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# Standard 2 Indicator 1

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## Conclusions

While there are opportunities in various curricular areas for students to demonstrate the school's 21st century learning expectations, the written curriculum is not purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Evidence shows three distinct sets of district core documents: (1) 21st century learning expectations and the school's core values and beliefs about learning, (2) five school-wide rubrics, and (3) Berlin K-12 Learner Outcomes. There is a lack of alignment amongst these three documents as they relate to the curriculum. Results from the Endicott survey indicate that 58.9 percent of the faculty agrees that the school's formal curriculum design ensures that all students practice and achieve the school's learning expectations; however, a review of Atlas Rubicon indicates that there is not a consistent connection between the 21st century learning expectations on this platform, with the exception of some courses. While most faculty are attempting to integrate 21st century learning expectations into instructional practice, the rubrics used for this purpose are not effectively aligned to measure the school's 21st century learning expectations nor Berlin K-12 Learner Outcomes. The school's integration of the 21st century learning expectations into specific courses is based on "natural fit," and are not purposefully integrated into courses in an organized or coherent way. Teachers are not directly responsible for teaching specific 21st century learning expectations, although they are required to use strands of the rubric on two assessments per quarter. Finally, the school does not collect or review data regarding the school's 21st century learning expectations in any purposeful way, nor are courses added or deleted from the curriculum in connection to their relationship to the 21st century learning expectations.

When the school's 21st century learning expectations are aligned with the school's core values and beliefs about learning, school-wide rubrics, and the Berlin K-12 Learner Outcomes, all students will be able to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

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

# Standard 2 Indicator 2

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## Conclusions

The vast majority of curriculum is written in a common format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, and instructional strategies. However, the inclusion of the school's 21st century learning expectations and assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic or course-specific rubrics, are not included in this common format, although in many cases they reside in the Schoology platform.

Each unit of study as outlined in Atlas Rubicon is organized to include essential questions, content, skills, key vocabulary, teaching tips, and resources. A common format to inform students as to the engagement point, content, and learning outcomes is visible on learning cards in most classrooms. Course-specific rubrics and school-specific rubrics may be being used, however, these are not clearly attached to units of study in Atlas Rubicon.

When curriculum is written in a common format, including assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic or course-specific rubrics, that are clearly aligned with learning expectations, all students will be able to achieve 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- facility tour
- student work
- teacher interview
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 2 Indicator 3

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## Conclusions

The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem-solving, higher order thinking, and informed and ethical use of technology; however, cross-disciplinary learning is not emphasized, and although authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school are becoming abundant, they are not necessarily purposefully aligned.

In Atlas Rubicon, Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels are often indicated on units of study identifying inquiry, problem-solving and higher order thinking. Inquiry and problem-solving and higher order thinking is happening in instructional practice. However, the expectations for inquiry and problem-solving and higher order thinking are not uniformly implemented in assessment practice across disciplines. The informed and ethical use of technology is promoted throughout the school. The library media specialist and technology integration specialist implement online lessons for students that explicitly instruct on the appropriate use of technology, Internet use policy, and privacy recommendations. In addition, advisory lessons are designed to cover topics such as technological security, digital footprints, and data caching. On the Endicott survey, students (87 percent), staff (85.3 percent), and parents (82.2 percent) agree that students are knowledgeable about the ethical use of technology.

The Endicott survey shows that 59.3 percent of students believe that their teachers include topics from other subject areas in their classes. Cross-disciplinary learning is happening in instructional practice when appropriate and contextualized. However, cross-disciplinary learning is not happening in an explicit, purposeful way. Only 41.1 percent of faculty agree that the curriculum emphasizes cross-disciplinary learning. Notably, however, 76.1 percent of students believe that the information they have learned in one class can be used in other classes.

Authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school are becoming abundant. It is clear that opportunities in Advanced Placement (AP), and Early College Experience (ECE) courses, as well as field trips and organizations such as upBeat, capstone, and DECA afford students multiple opportunities for authentic learning at the school. Endicott survey results reveal that 62 percent of students believe that the school provides opportunities for learning off campus including field trips, internships, job shadowing, and college courses. The survey results also reveal that 81.1 percent of faculty and 67.8 percent of parents are in agreement that the curriculum emphasizes authentic application of knowledge and skills. However, the written curriculum does not support these findings.

The overall educational experience of students emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem-solving, higher order thinking, informed and ethical use of technology, and authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school; when both cross-disciplinary and authentic learning opportunities are also aligned with the written curriculum and the district's core documents, all students be able to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

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

# Standard 2 Indicator 4

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## Conclusions

There is mostly clear alignment between the written curriculum and the taught curriculum.

According to the Endicott survey, 75.8 percent of the faculty believe that the written and taught curricula are aligned. Department heads indicated that teacher observations exhibit close alignment with curriculum written in Atlas Rubicon. Teachers and department heads report that there is inconsistent use of Atlas Rubicon by departments to guide the taught curriculum. Platforms such as Atlas Rubicon and Schoology provide accessible portals for teachers to access, share, and revise curriculum documents in an efficient manner ensuring that the curriculum is relevant and up to date. Schoology is accessible by students and Atlas is available publicly online. Currently, CPT is a valuable resource for aligning the written curriculum and taught curriculum. This time is often focused on the alignment of tasks, assessments, rubrics, and standards. The time is used to adjust and revise curricula based on student data, including past student performance from common assessments, external assessments such as the PSATs, and information from sending programs. However, teachers report that CPT is impacted when teachers are pulled out for class coverage, PPTs, and other tasks. This reduces the time allowed for more curriculum alignment.

When clear alignment between written and taught curriculum is achieved, then students will be guaranteed an aligned and consistent curriculum.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- department leaders
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 2 Indicator 5

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## Conclusions

Curricular coordination and vertical articulation generally exist between and among academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.

For departments with a department head, there is general curricular coordination and vertical articulation between and among academic areas. Atlas Rubicon is used by all content areas at the school to support curricular coordination. In addition, English, social studies, mathematics, and science, have vertical teams that generally meet twice per year. A district curriculum coordinator oversees the curriculum for the English and social studies departments, and this coordinator works with the department leaders to schedule and plan the vertical team meetings that occur twice a year. In addition, the English department head and the math department head have dedicated meetings to vertically align curriculum with their respective district curriculum coordinators with attention to the transition from 8th to 9th grade. The majority of units of study for courses in these departments are robust and well-articulated in Atlas Rubicon.

For departments without a department head, there is not consistent curricular coordination and vertical articulation between and among academic areas. Some content areas, including world languages, art, CTE, HPE, and special education do not have district coordinators or vertical teams. Although these departments have dedicated CPT time to articulate and coordinate curriculum, occasionally teachers from all subject areas are pulled out of CPT for class coverage, PPTs, and other tasks. This reduces the time allowed for vertical articulation.

While curricular coordination and vertical articulation are robust in some areas, when curricular coordination and vertical articulation consistently exist between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district, students will be assured of a well articulated and coordinated curricular experience.

## Sources of Evidence

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

# Standard 2 Indicator 6

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## Conclusions

Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are generally sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.

The staffing levels are generally sufficient. However, there is a concern expressed that certain student learning opportunities are curtailed due to a lack of staffing even though excellent technologies and facilities to run these programs exist. The instructional materials are generally sufficient. The results of the Endicott survey show that 70.5 percent of faculty and 89.2 percent of students agree. In addition, the office support staff indicated that the instructional materials, equipment, and supplies are generally sufficient to support the curriculum. Department heads report that content-specific items required for curriculum implementation are generally approved. The updated facilities are mostly sufficient. In general, the 1:1 Chromebook laptop program and the presence of movable student desks allow for flexible groups and other instructional strategies to support curriculum implementation. Some concerns related to facilities include outdoor fields and running track safety concerns, and difficulties implementing collaborative workshop models in English classrooms due to room size. With the exception of the volume of written texts available to students, the resources of the library media center are sufficient. The library is resource-rich and effectively supports students' access to curriculum. Contextualized library/medial lessons are pushed into classrooms to ensure that students are aware of databases and resources that will ensure they can access curricular resources both in and outside the classroom.

As a result of sufficient staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center, the school is able to fully implement the curriculum and ensure that all students have the resources necessary to achieve 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- parents
- department leaders
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 2 Indicator 7

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## Conclusions

The district adequately provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research.

While the Endicott survey data indicates that 53.7 percent of faculty members report that they do not have sufficient time to be engaged in formal curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work, the following are examples of opportunities across departments in which the school's professional staff has engaged in content-specific curriculum development and revision. Multiple departments have had the opportunity to engage in extensive content-related best practice with the support of district time and financial resources. For example, the science department spent six school days to receive Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) training. Staff now use the NGSS to write and revise curriculum that was traditionally based on the Connecticut State Science Framework. Social Studies, English, and mathematics departments have spent professional development time working with Heidi Hayes Jacobs to apply current research to curriculum development and revision. The technology education, business, and family consumer sciences departments use the Connecticut Career Technical Education (CTE) standards to develop and revise curricula. The special education department uses Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals and objectives to inform curriculum. The social studies department writes and revises course curricula based on the Connecticut Social Studies Framework. During the 2016-2017 school year, science teachers were trained in NGSS, world languages teachers were trained in the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), and math, social studies, and English teachers had SAT training. In addition, two sessions of professional development time have been devoted to training all faculty in habits of mind. The school staff meets in CPT teams generally twice every four-day rotation. Many times teachers are pulled from CPT to cover duties for absent teachers. This impacts teachers' ability to engage with the ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum. Assessment results are used to inform curriculum development, evaluation, and revision in some content areas. For example, the physical education department uses CT Physical Fitness Assessments, and the English and math departments use PSAT results to target specific strands and subsections. While a variety of co-curricular activities are offered, most, besides athletics, are not funded by the school beyond the stipend for teachers who run these programs. Based on the Endicott survey, 35.8 percent of the faculty feel that co-curricular programs are adequately funded; while 66.7 percent of parents state that they are adequately funded.

As a result of providing the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results, all students will be able to achieve 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- teacher interview
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee



# Standard 2 Commendations

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## Commendation

The increased attention to 21st century learning expectations

## Commendation

The many opportunities across curricular areas for students to demonstrate 21st century learning expectations

## Commendation

The widespread use of Atlas Rubicon, a common curriculum writing platform, by all content areas

## Commendation

The widespread use of Schoology in classroom instruction

## Commendation

The inclusion of instructional strategies, teaching tips, in written curriculum to guide common teaching practice

## Commendation

The wide array of offerings of Advanced Placement (AP) courses and Early College Experience (ECE) courses

## Commendation

The abundance of co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities

## Commendation

The use of inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking in the written and taught curriculum

## Commendation

The general alignment of written and taught curriculum across departments

## **Commendation**

The use of Schoology and Atlas Rubicon to update and revise curricula

The accessibility of curriculum for staff

The work of department heads and curriculum facilitators in curricular coordination and vertical articulation of their content areas

The dedicated work of CPT teams in curricular coordination and vertical articulation of their subject areas

The adequate updated facilities

The resource-rich support of the library/media center

The adequate access to equipment, technology, and instructional materials across departments

The availability of CPT and dedicated professional development time

The opportunities provided for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum

The significant improvement in PSAT performance due to curriculum revisions tied to student performance

# Standard 2 Recommendations

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## Recommendation

Ensure that the curriculum is purposefully designed so that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations

## Recommendation

Ensure that all written curriculum includes the school's 21st century learning expectations and assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic or course-specific rubrics

## Recommendation

Ensure that all departments have sufficient leadership to ensure effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation

## Recommendation

Ensure the written curriculum emphasizes the application of knowledge through authentic learning experiences and cross-disciplinary opportunities

## Recommendation

Ensure that the school's professional staff has sufficient and dedicated time for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research

## Recommendation

## Recommendation

# Standard 3 Indicator 1

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## Conclusions

While teachers' instructional practices may be informally examined, there is no formal process to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.

Although each classroom has a display of core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, teachers inconsistently connect these expectations to a variety of assessment and instructional practices that are not clearly linked together in a school-wide common language. Several departments create content-oriented rubrics that indirectly link to the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. This inconsistency does not support the purpose of universal expectations. Even though the Endicott survey indicates that 66.3 percent of faculty, and 56.3 percent of the parents agree or strongly agree that teachers continuously examine their instructional practices to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, there is no evidence to support the survey results. There is no evidence that teachers engage in reflective practices around the beliefs about learning, although through collaboration with CPT, there is evidence that teachers examine student assessment data which may inform instructional practices, but not necessarily ensuring consistency with the implementation of the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.

When all teachers consistently examine the connection between the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations and instructional practices, then all students will be able to achieve 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey

# Standard 3 Indicator 2

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## Conclusions

Teachers' instructional practices consistently support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by personalizing instruction, engaging students as active and self-directed learners; emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving and using higher order thinking; applying knowledge and skills in authentic tasks, and integrating technology; however, instructional practices inconsistently support cross-disciplinary learning and engagement of students in self-assessment and meaningful reflection.

Teachers at the school regularly personalize instruction and maintain open contact with parents and students regarding student progress. According to the Endicott survey, 82.1 percent of teachers agree or strongly agree that instruction is personalized to support the achievement of the school's learning expectations. Teachers on a daily basis constantly modify instruction with the best interest of their students. According to the Endicott survey, 38 percent of students surveyed report their teachers personalize instruction. It is clear that teachers supply various examples of one-to-one instruction, small group work, student-to-teacher announcements via Schoology and email. On a daily basis, teachers work closely with support staff which helps create personalized instruction tailored to every student. Instruction is personalized consistently across disciplines which range from Academic Reading and Academic Math Support which provides student additional instruction and coping skills on specific concepts relevant to the curriculum. Across the school, teachers work in conjunction with support staff to create a personalized instruction of self-directedness. For example, 74 percent of students and faculty agree students are presented with opportunities for self-assessment and reflection.

Occasionally, cross-disciplinary learning opportunities are integrated in the classroom learning environment mindset on meaningful, relevant instruction. An exemplary example of a cross-disciplinary class would be the capstone project. Half of the senior class is scheduled for Capstone class each semester. At the school, an English teacher is in charge of the class with guest teachers supporting the class in the areas of technology and library/media services. Students also meet with their capstone coordinator weekly and capstone advisor biweekly. The final presentation may use the administration as the scorer of the final project. In the past, cross-curricula courses ranged from Humanities to Sports Statistics. Chemistry classes have also made rock candy in conjunction with consumer education. The science department also has worked closely with the art department with the expectation that students understand the chemistry of ceramics.

The use of learning cards supports higher order thinking and emphasizing inquiry and problem-solving; these have been implemented and used in most classrooms, and the vast majority of teachers use learning cards to organize their delivery of instruction. Most students knew what the three colored cards meant and their role in the class learning environment. Students are given the opportunity to participate in many inquiry-based activities which range from Project Oceanography, titrations, dissections, as well as one new class, Cooking Chemistry. Due to scheduling conflicts, limited space, limited faculty, and budget constraints, some programs have been eliminated due to staff reductions.

Students often work independently or collaboratively with classmates on projects. Often teachers ask students to apply knowledge and skills to authentic tasks and provide meaningful and relevant examples. Students in engineering classes develop products which allow students to design through inquiry-based STEM learning. According to the Endicott survey, 59.3 percent of students agree that they have the opportunity to apply what they are learning outside of the classroom. According to the Endicott survey, 68.8 percent of students surveyed report their teachers use a variety of teaching strategies, and 53.55 percent of parents surveyed reported that teachers modify/adjust their instructional practices based on students' progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

With the benefit of one-to-one Chromebooks at the school, teachers from all disciplines integrate technology into teaching and learning. According to the Endicott survey results, 93.2 percent of students agree with the statement, My teachers ask me to use technology in my assignments. Based on an Additional Support and Alternative Strategies survey, staff reported providing additional support or alternative instructional strategies for students through the use of interactive technology (75 percent), text resources through Schoology (69 percent), the full-time technology integration specialist (58 percent), and tutorials through Schoology (41 percent). The

district maintains a list of technology best practices for all teachers. Teachers have access to professional development, both formal and informal, that integrates technology into teaching and learning. The staff at the high school employs a list of technology resources such as IEP Direct, Google Drive, High School, and College Board to support SAT preparation. Interactive learning tools and applications are often used, including Khan Academy, GeoGebra, Turnitin, PhET Interactive Simulations, Bozeman Science flipped classrooms, YouTube videos, Wordle, Polleverywhere, Kahoot, and Quizlet. Online textbooks and content resources like CK12 are used in multiple courses. Additionally, handheld devices such as graphing calculators and Vernier technology are used in math and science courses. In Anatomy and Physiology and Forensics, students use their cellphones to photograph through microscopes and upload the photos to create a digital media album in Schoology. Additionally, the school's technology integration specialist manages a student group called the techsperts which provides student-to-student support on all technology applications.

When teachers' instructional practices consistently support personalizing instruction, engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning, engaging students as active and self-directed learners; emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving and utilization of higher order thinking; applying knowledge and skills in authentic tasks, engaging students in self-assessment and reflection, and integrating technology, then students will achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

## **Sources of Evidence**

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

# Standard 3 Indicator 3

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## Conclusions

Teachers frequently adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by using formative assessment, especially during instructional time, strategically differentiating, purposefully organizing group learning activities, and providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom.

According to the Endicott survey, 75 percent of teachers use formative assessments during instruction time which is geared toward instructional good practices. Teachers use the following: written responses, practice presentations, meaningful class discussions, warm-up tasks, exit slips, pre-lab reports, individual conferencing, peer- and self-assessments, and graphic organizers.

Regarding strategic differentiation, 85 percent of teachers on the Endicott survey agree they use differentiated instructional practices to meet the learning needs of all students. Student feedback is normally provided by Google Docs and Schoology. Teachers report that they want more differentiated instruction (DI) training. The Endicott survey results show that 85.3 percent of teachers agree that they "use differentiated instructional practices to meet the learning needs of all students." In some areas, differentiation is used in the moment when students are struggling. Some examples of this include small group and individual instruction, peer tutoring, science class layered curriculum, student choice of material of the subject matter, and scaffold instruction based on individual abilities.

According to the results of the Endicott survey, 91.6 percent of staff agree that they organize group learning activities to adjust instructional practice. Teachers report that students are often grouped by ability, allowing proficient students the opportunity to explore topics more in-depth while students still progressing are provided further instruction and practice. Alternatively, many teachers also employ heterogeneous grouping, allowing opportunities for students to learn from peers. According to the Endicott survey, 68.8 percent of students and 82.1 percent of parents agree that teachers use a variety of teaching strategies in courses. Those teaching strategies include the support of IEPs/504s, academic math support, academic reading, peer revision/editing, small group instruction, individual instruction. The student body agreed strongly that teachers use a variety of teaching strategies. Across the school, teachers use computer programs to enhance the quality of instruction which includes Kahoot, Poll Everywhere, exit slips, mini whiteboards, video reviews, guided reading activities, scaffolding for written assignments, study buddy note-taking skills/strategies, and note-taking through Schoology. Programs such as STEP, the writing center, and the school advisory program help students become learners. The school as a whole continues to implement an initiative to adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of the students through formative assessments, differentiated instruction, and organizing group learning activities.

Because teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of students by using formative assessment, differentiation, purposefully organize group learning activities, and provide additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom, all students have the opportunity to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

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

- Standard sub-committee



# Standard 3 Indicator 4

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## Conclusions

Teachers, individually and collaboratively, often improve their instructional practices by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments, examining student work, using feedback from a variety of sources, examining current research, and engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.

Teachers are scheduled to have two common planning time (CPT) sessions per four-day rotation. However, teachers indicate that they are sometimes pulled from these scheduled times to cover classes due to lack of substitute teachers. When CPTs meet, teachers improve their instructional practices by using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments. The Endicott survey shows that 58.9 percent of teachers report that they have formal opportunities to examine student work to improve instruction. Although CPTs have been scheduled for collaboration, however, CPT is not used for inter-disciplinary examination of student work or alignment of school-wide rubric implementation. Teachers use data from PSAT, SAT, and school-based placement assessments to make decisions regarding their instructional practices.

The Endicott survey shows that 42.4 percent of students are asked by teachers for ideas/opinions to improve their teacher's instruction. Additional sources of feedback include supervisors via the teacher evaluation plan (i.e., formal, informal) and review of practice. Twenty-six percent of parents who participated in the Endicott survey indicated that teachers infrequently ask for feedback about their instructional practices. Teachers indicated that current research and instructional strategies are distributed by the school administration, department leaders, and peers. Opportunities to engage in professional discourse on best practices related to instruction occurs during CPTs, faculty meetings, plus internal and external professional development.

Because teachers work individually and collaboratively to examine student achievement from formative and summative assessments, examine student work, accept constructive feedback from a variety of resources, examine current research and participate in professional discourse, teachers are able to improve and students will be able to achieve 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

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

# Standard 3 Indicator 5

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## Conclusions

Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, consistently maintain expertise in their content areas and in content-specific instructional practices.

According to the Endicott survey results, 91 percent of teachers believe they maintain expertise in their content areas and in content-specific instructional practices. Common planning time, internal and external professional development, conferences and advanced degree programs are methods teachers use to maintain expertise. Ninety-three percent of the certified staff have advanced degrees. During monthly department meetings, content information is distributed and discussed to enhance the curriculum while instructional practices are examined to facilitate the implementation of the curriculum. Teachers selected to attend external professional development opportunities are expected to share this information with members of their department or the entire faculty. Faculty meetings always include a presentation on how technology can improve student learning. Although the majority of teachers indicate that they are approved for external professional development, some teachers expressed concern that the lack of substitute teachers places an undue burden on fellow department members. In addition, external professional development opportunities, such as time provided for NGSS staff and ACTFL standards for world languages staff, is evident as a review of student work indicates that these new standards are emerging in their implementation in instructional practice.

As a result of teachers consistently maintaining expertise in their content areas and exploring content-specific instructional practices, the quality of instruction will ensure that students are able to achieve 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 3 Commendations

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## Commendation

The display of the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations throughout the building

## Commendation

The capstone project, which culminates the seniors' academic learning

## Commendation

The positive impact that teachers have on their students

## Commendation

The availability and use of technology

## Commendation

The use of formative assessments

## Commendation

The purposeful organization of group learning activities

## Commendation

The integration/utilization of STEP

## Commendation

The accessibility of the writing center

## Commendation

The analysis of formative and summative assessment data to improve instructional practice within departments

## **Commendation**

The scheduling of two CPTs per four-day schedule for teacher collaboration

# Standard 3 Recommendations

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## Recommendation

Ensure consistent understanding of the school's core values, beliefs about 21st century learning expectations and how they are linked to school-wide rubrics

## Recommendation

Ensure consistent and dedicated common planning time

## Recommendation

Increase opportunities for student reflection on instructional practices

## Recommendation

Create more opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning and interdisciplinary discourse

## Recommendation

Identify the facets of a common language of differentiated instruction and implement differentiated instruction professional development

## Recommendation

Use common formative assessments to look for trends in data to inform instructional practice

## Recommendation

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## Recommendation

## Recommendation

# Standard 4 Indicator 1

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## Conclusions

Many teachers at the school use portions of the school-wide analytic rubrics in assessing the school's 21st century learning expectations; however, the school has no formal process in place to assess individual student progress or whole-school progress in achieving each strand of the school-wide rubrics.

Sixty percent of the faculty reported using the school-wide rubrics to measure and assess 21st century learning expectations and student progress. Departments identified certain strands and particular expectations in the school-wide rubrics that would be a focus area for their courses. The use of teacher rubrics is applied to course-specific learning goals rather than 21st century learning expectations. Interviews with teachers revealed the incorporation of school-wide rubrics, however, they stated the need for professional development to assist in the implementation. Teachers were required to use a rubric in the 2017-2018 school year to actively examine the categories and evaluate its suitability. Sixty percent of staff stated they understood the use of school-wide rubrics to assess whole-school and individual progress in achieving learning expectations. Administration confirmed there is no formal process to be sure each strand of each rubric is assessed for each student nor for the whole school.

When the school staff employs a formal process based on the school-wide analytic rubrics in assessing the school's 21st century learning expectations, then whole-school and individual student progress can be accurately assessed.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student work
- teachers
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

# Standard 4 Indicator 2

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## Conclusions

The school staff does not communicate extensively about individual student and whole-school progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students, families, and the school community.

Although teachers are required to complete assessments using the school-wide rubrics, as of May 2018, school-wide rubrics are not reported out to families, however, a process was piloted in the 2017-2018 school year to disseminate this information using PowerSchool only visible to teachers. Sixty percent of parents report the school provides individual student progress toward achieving the school's 21st learning expectations during teacher conferences in October and March of the 2017-2018 school year. Parents reported they see rubrics come home with assignments but do not see the final scored rubrics. Science and history teachers reported that students and teachers reflect on graded rubrics through conferencing with students on particular assessments. Staff at the school use a rubric generator, created by the technology integration specialist, with the assistance of a "techspert," to select particular strands to assess students, however, there is not a systematic approach to assessments using school-wide rubrics. Whole-school progress in achieving the school's 21st learning expectations has not been examined nor reported out to the school community. School administration know that holes exist in the collection of all strands of the school-wide rubrics and is working to find these holes and address the gaps in assessment. Furthermore, teachers report entering the assessment of strands into PowerSchool, however, little is done past the entry of the information to communicate progress to parents and the school community.

When the school implements a plan for a formalized process to communicate in writing to all students, parents, and stakeholders that students have met or are making progress toward individual targeted levels of achievement based on the analytic rubrics, then all students will have a clear understanding of their progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- parents
- school leadership

# Standard 4 Indicator 3

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## Conclusions

The school professional staff sometimes collects, disaggregates and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.

According to the Endicott survey, 46 percent of staff agree that staff collects, disaggregates and analyzes data. English teachers use the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT) data as both formative and summative assessments. As a summative assessment, the PSAT is used to identify a student's need for reading intervention. PSAT results are used as a formative assessment when English teachers are identifying and establishing department goals. Science teachers plan to use the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) test in the spring of 2019 to identify inequities in student achievement. There is no electronic data management system in place, thus teachers are responsible for collecting, analyzing and disaggregating their own data by department. Administrators have access to disaggregate data based on gender, race, and socioeconomic background. The math and English departments are analyzing PSAT score data with the assistance of the district data clerks and are using results from the assessment to guide instruction on specific strands in each discipline. Since 2015, the mean PSAT scores in math and reading/writing have increased from 515 and 516, respectively, to 538 and 548 in 2018. When all departments at the school collect, disaggregate, and analyze data, then inequities in student achievement can be identified and addressed.

## Sources of Evidence

- teachers
- department leaders
- school support staff
- Endicott survey



# Standard 4 Indicator 4

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## Conclusions

Prior to each unit of study, teachers frequently communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed.

The use of the learning cards, either digitally or on paper, are evident in many classrooms. The engagement point, content, and learner outcomes for each lesson or unit of study are posted either on the board, in Schoology, or Google Docs and may link to the 21st learning expectations. Math teachers start classes with "do nows" to engage students in the spiraling math concepts. The cards also inform students of what they need to know and be able to do by the end of the lesson. On the Endicott survey, 64 percent of teachers agree that they communicate to students the unit-related specific learning goals. Seventy-one percent of students agree that teachers explain what the learning expectations are before each unit of study. Vertical articulation of learning cards has been in place since 2014 and teachers and students are well versed with their use.

Because all teachers communicate to students about the applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals prior to each unit of study, students know what is expected and are able to make progress on learning objectives.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- Endicott survey

# Standard 4 Indicator 5

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## Conclusions

Prior to summative assessments, teachers frequently provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success, such as corresponding rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement.

Seventy-five percent of students agree that they understand in advance what they need to do in order to meet their teachers' expectations. Students also agree (80 percent) that teachers use clear criteria, such as rubrics, to assess their work. Often student work includes teacher-generated criteria checklists with associated point values focused on how to achieve a successful grade on the assessment. Teachers in core classes discuss grading criteria in their common planning time in order to calibrate their scoring of summative assessments. Exemplars are used in some courses, such as English and history courses to show students how to meet or exceed expectations. Teachers report a lack of clarity about what the levels of achievement are for ninth grade students and what is expected of them as they progress through high school and what the criteria looks like for students in their senior year.

Because, prior to summative assessments, teachers frequently provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success, such as corresponding rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement, students frequently understand the expectations, when all teachers provide specific and measurable criteria that has been calibrated, all students will understand the expectations and be able to work toward meeting or exceeding those expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 4 Indicator 6

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## Conclusions

Teachers at the school consistently employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.

Ninety-four percent of teachers agree that teachers employ a range of assessment strategies in each unit of study. Examples of students performing authentic assessments include the Marketing ad for Buffalo Wild Wings, a unique juice box that could be assembled, and a children's story book for a Civics course. Examples of formative assessments include exit slips and quizzes on Schoology. In one class, a science teacher informally assessed students prior to a jigsaw exchange which informed her instruction at that moment in the lesson before she allowed them to move on in the activity. Although teachers consistently use a variety of assessment strategies. Many summative writing assessments in English and history are analyzed using the school-wide writing rubric. Furthermore, students are allowed to make revisions to assessments based on feedback on the rubric to increase learning.

Because teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, which include formative and summative assessments, teacher practice is informed.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student work
- department leaders

# Standard 4 Indicator 7

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## Conclusions

Teachers collaborate frequently in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments including common assessments.

Common planning time (CPT) is the only means for teachers to find time to collaborate on assessments. Eighty-one percent of teachers report they formally collaborate. After-school department meetings and professional development days provide some time for teachers to collaborate. Common planning time minutes reflect that some departments collaborate more often than others. For example, documented revisions of assessments have occurred in both the math and science departments. In some areas such as fine arts and technical education, teachers teach singleton courses and do not have the leadership to oversee that they regularly meet to review and revise assessments. English and history teachers stated they revised the way they present curriculum based on common assessment results. Rather than present history topics chronologically, they present units of study based on geography or theme. Alternatively, English teachers found that as they reflect on student assessments that students struggle with theme-based and switched to chronological implementation of curriculum. Department leaders report that teachers in their content areas create, analyze, and revise assessments, but when teachers are pulled from the CPT the work does not always get done.

When all teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments including common assessments, then students' needs will be identified and met.

## Sources of Evidence

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

# Standard 4 Indicator 8

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## Conclusions

The professional staff at the school regularly provides specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.

Seventy-one percent of students agree teachers regularly provide timely and corrective feedback. Students indicated that teachers commonly use formative assessments such as "do nows," think-pair-share, and short answer questions to show their understanding of the standards at the beginning of a unit of study. While teaching a unit, many teachers provide learning cards at the beginning of each class outlining what will be covered and indicating engagements points. Teachers provide both written and oral feedback to students to help them successfully meet the standards in each unit of study. Most teachers use technology to provide written feedback using Schoology, Turnitin, and Google Docs. Comments are seen by students in real time and they can work in a document at the same time a teacher is offering feedback, promoting collaboration and critical thinking. Teachers in English and social studies use the writing revision process on summative assessments and make suggestions for improvement so the student can submit his/her best writing. For midterm and final exams, students stated most teachers are available for extra help after school.

As a result of teachers regularly providing specific, timely, and corrective feedback, students are able to improve their work.

## Sources of Evidence

- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey

# Standard 4 Indicator 9

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## Conclusions

Teachers frequently use formative assessment to inform and adapt instruction to improve student learning.

Eighty-eight percent of students affirm teachers adjust instructional practices to meet student needs by using formative assessments. The results of the formative assessments are used to determine the pace of instruction, assignment instructions, and depth of materials. Some examples of formative assessment include discussion, practice problems, Kahoot polls, Schoology quizzes, the use of whiteboards and exit slips. Seventy-eight percent of teachers indicate that they use formative assessments at least once per week, and 98 percent of teachers report they do the same in the 2017 "The Use of Formative Assessments" survey. They also expressed the type of these assessments ranged from entrance slips, "do-nows," and turn and talks.

As a result of teachers consistently using formative assessments in all subject areas, teachers are able to adapt instruction to improve student learning.

## Sources of Evidence

- teacher interview
- students
- department leaders
- Endicott survey

# Standard 4 Indicator 10

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## Conclusions

Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, sometimes examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice including student work, common course and common grade-level assessments, individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations, standardized assessments, data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions and survey data from current students and alumni.

Forty-eight percent of teachers agree they examine a variety and range of student work, common course assessment, common grade-level assessment, and standardized assessments to revise and improve curriculum and instructional practices. The departments that do this often are English, science, mathematics, and social studies. It is less frequent in other content areas. During CPT teachers often examine common course and grade-level assessments, individually and collaboratively, to revise the curriculum and improve instructional practice. Teachers are working with a number of custom rubrics in addition to the school-wide rubrics, and use data from these to revise the curriculum and to improve instructional practices. Math teachers examine standardized assessments individually and during CPT to improve instruction. In the summer of 2017, the English and math departments examined student data and identified areas of weakness related to standardized testing. The analysis resulted in adjustments in English that incorporated more grammar and vocabulary and in math more reviews and non-calculator questions in class. The math department examines vertical articulation of Algebra I standards and adjusts instruction for geometry. There is no formal survey data from alumni to examine to revise the curriculum and improve instructional practices.

When teachers and administrators commit to making provisions for examining a range of evidence of student learning including student work, common course and common grade-level assessments, individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations, standardized assessments, data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions and survey data from current students and alumni, then curriculum and instructional practice will improve.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- Endicott survey

# Standard 4 Indicator 11

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## Conclusions

At the high school, grading and reporting practices are infrequently reviewed and adjusted to enhance alignment with the core values and beliefs about learning.

The teacher handbook states specific grading policies with regard to timelines for grading homework and quizzes within one week, lab reports, essays, exams and tests within two weeks and long term projects graded within three weeks. Teachers are required to post assignments and corresponding documents via Schoology and PowerSchool gradebook. Across the school there is no commonly agreed upon requirement for point or percentage breakdown, however, teachers are required to cap the weight of homework at 15 percent of students' total grades. These guidelines attempt to enhance the consistency in grading and reporting. The staff recognizes the need to implement a more formal review process to discuss the grading practices as they correlate to the reporting on the school-wide rubrics. Some subject areas and common courses align grading practices with regard to weighed categories, but many do not and also do not have the same number of assessments per quarter. The use of PowerSchool and Schoology was considered and piloted to incorporate new grading practices to report student outcomes of the school-wide rubrics. Thirty-eight percent of staff agree that school-wide grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised.

When the school deliberately sets a procedure to review and adjust grading and reporting practices to align with the school's core values and beliefs about learning, students will be assured of grading practices that are consistent and accurately report their progress and achievement.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school leadership
- school support staff



# Standard 4 Commendations

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## Commendation

The work to date on the development, calibration, and implementation of school-wide rubrics to provide students with specific feedback regarding progress toward achieving 21st century learning expectations

## Commendation

The creation and use of the rubric generator

## Commendation

The use of a formal assessment system to provide teachers with data on critical learning targets

## Commendation

The establishment of a formal process to identify students for academic interventions

## Commendation

The utilization of data by all departments to inform instruction

## Commendation

The use of learning cards to articulate the course expectations, school-wide learning expectations, and assessment performance standards to students prior to each unit of study

## Commendation

The specific and measurable criteria for success shared with students prior to summative assessments

## Commendation

The assessment of students in multiple ways so that they may demonstrate their understanding and progress

## Commendation

The use of common assessments by teachers

## **Commendation**

The use of common planning time to discuss assessment to improve curriculum and instruction

The timely and specific feedback provided by teachers

The multiple modes of feedback including technology, written comments, conferencing, and discussion

The consistent use of formative assessment to adjust instruction

The use of CPT to improve practice and student outcomes, to develop common assessments and to modify common rubrics

The posting of assignments and corresponding documents on Schoology

The recording of student outcomes in PowerSchool

# Standard 4 Recommendations

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## Recommendation

Initiate and implement a plan to review grading practices within departments and across the school to align with the school's core values and beliefs about learning

## Recommendation

Develop a more formalized system to survey alumni and use these data to inform instruction in all departments

## Recommendation

Ensure that supervision processes, such as frequent instructional rounds, provide an accurate understanding of instructional practices and focus on improved student learning

## Recommendation

Complete the development and implementation of a formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics

## Recommendation

Complete development and implementation of a process to communicate individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families and whole-school progress to the school community

## Recommendation

Use of a variety of formative assessments and summative assessment of the 21st century learning expectations in all departments and ensure teachers can easily access the formative and summative assessments

## Recommendation

Establish benchmarks for high levels of achievement for the school-wide or content-specific rubrics

## Recommendation

## Recommendation

# Standard 5 Indicator 1

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## Conclusions

The school community has worked to build a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for most students.

The student, parent and teacher handbooks communicate high expectations for all students including responsibility for attendance, behavior, supportive culture, pride, and school climate. Staff have confidence in the principal's ability to directly and consistently communicate when a major issue arises. There are minimal disciplinary issues; eight suspensions, forty-eight in-school suspensions, and one case of vandalism over the course of the 2017-2018 school year.

The faculty and students foster a sense of tolerance, diversity, pride, ownership and positive school culture by involvement in the following clubs or groups: LGBTQ, upBeat, School Climate, Random Acts of Kindness, Unity Team, Habitat for Humanity, athletics, and music programs. Conversations with various students and teachers indicate rigorous learning and behavior goals, respect for each other and teachers, and participation in the school community at a very high rate; however, administration acknowledges the need for more training as the school becomes increasingly diverse.

When this school community comprehensively recognizes the diversity of all students, then the school culture will be positive and supportive for all learners as they foster ownership, pride and high expectations for all students.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- parents
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 5 Indicator 2

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## Conclusions

The school is somewhat equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for most students. Elective courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body and fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Core classes are homogeneously grouped; a function of scheduling procedures in PowerSchool and the existence of multiple levels. The program of studies outlines course sequences for students seeking four-year highly competitive colleges/universities, four-year moderately competitive colleges/universities and lastly two-year colleges or vocational/technical training. Students with disabilities have access to the curriculum through numerous co-taught and modified curriculum classes. Most students are expected to achieve school-wide learning expectations with the assistance of special education teachers, paras, and other support staff. However, administration indicated there is a need to reduce the number of leveled core academic classes, which may lead to more heterogeneously grouped core academic classes. The program of studies mentions college career pathways; however, there is no formal application of this program. Stakeholders and parents both mentioned that there is no focus or educational plan for students who are not college bound.

When the school is fully equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, all students will have access to and support to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- teacher interview
- teachers
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school website

# Standard 5 Indicator 3

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## Conclusions

By design, there are formal, ongoing programs and processes through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

The school has an advisory period that meets regularly on full-day Wednesdays throughout the school year, which is a forum for addressing the school's core values as well as student skill and relationship building through lessons on topics such as Habits of Mind. Staff report that in recent years the program runs less often and can be too lesson driven, which sometimes interferes with relationship building. Seniors are assigned to a capstone advisor, who helps them develop and design their required projects and ensures they meet all deadlines for their presentations. Because there are such strong connections between staff and students, any senior struggling to complete the capstone has an adult outside of the assigned advisor and capstone teacher to help complete the process. Students, staff, and parents report that guidance is highly accessible and helpful with all aspects of student life at the school including student success plan development and specialized presentations on the college application process. Students with social, emotional, academic, or behavioral issues may be assigned to specialized programs such as Success in Transitions, Education, and Personal Growth (STEP) and the Alternative Academic Programming (AAP) and have additional access to personalized support through a school psychologist or social worker.

Because there are deliberate, formal, and ongoing processes through which each student has an adult who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations, students will continue to make valuable connections with each other and adult members of the school community.

## Sources of Evidence

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

# Standard 5 Indicator 4

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## Conclusions

In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff often engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning; use some resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices; have dedicated formal time to implement professional development; and apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Teachers use common planning time (CPT) and department meetings as opportunities for discourse, reflection, and discussion of best practices. However, in recent years, the lack of sub coverage and/or leadership for some departments has impacted the efficacy of these meetings. Recent changes in school leadership have positively impacted the regularity of these meetings. Teachers, department chairs, as well as building and central office leadership, routinely share ideas via email regarding literature on research-based best practices. Vertical teaming structures have been in place for many years to promote alignment district-wide. Teachers cite training on school-wide initiatives such as learning cards (i.e., engagement point, content, outcomes) and Habits of Mind have led to consistent school-wide implementation. Teacher report they do not have input regarding the content of professional development as well as its relevance to their practice. Teachers and administrators are allowed to attend conferences, as budgets permit, and have recently been encouraged to visit other schools to enhance their teaching strategies in specific content areas such as music and math.

As a result of consistent professional discourse, routine use of resources, dedicated professional development, and application of these skills and practices to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment, students are able to achieve 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

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

# Standard 5 Indicator 5

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## Conclusions

School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that are inconsistently focused on improved student learning.

Teachers and administrators report that the school uses the state teacher evaluation plan with on and off observation cycles (depending on tenure status) and reviews of practice (team meetings, planning and placement team meetings, and other artifacts). However, there are inconsistencies with announced versus unannounced visits between evaluators. Additionally, Endicott survey results indicate that only 46 percent of teachers feel that input from their supervisors, who are responsible for evaluating their teaching, play an important role in improving their instructional practices. Moreover, professional development has not been responsive to the goals set by teachers on their professional growth and evaluation plans and has been focused on disjointed initiatives with minimal teacher input. However, teachers consistently expressed optimism that recent evaluation meetings have been more collaborative in nature and seem to be designed to help teachers improve their practice.

When school leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes and consistently provide teacher feedback that is designed to improve instructional practices that focuses on student learning, then teachers will be able to improve their practice and better support student learning.

## Sources of Evidence

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



# Standard 5 Indicator 6

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## Conclusions

The organization of time fully supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of some students.

The current school schedule consists of eight class periods, organized within a four-day rotation, that allows for a total of six classes to meet each day. The periods rotate each day, but periods 1, 2, and 3 are always at the beginning of the day and periods 6, 7, and 8 are always at the end of the day.

Regular classes are one hour in duration, and each class meets a minimum of three out of every four days per week. Core science classes meet for an extra lab period once every four days while AP/UConn ECE science courses meet an additional two periods every four days. The longer class periods facilitate a variety of teaching methods that increase student responsibility for learning, including group work, independent work, student presentations, lab time, and research time

The eight period schedule offers opportunities for students to take additional courses. It is also designed to provide teachers with regular common planning time (CPT), where they routinely collaborate (twice during each four-day rotation) with colleagues in their departments. The school provides alternative programs for students who are better served outside of a traditional classroom setting.

As a result of the deliberate organization of time that fully and consistently supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, the learning needs of students can be met.

## Sources of Evidence

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

# Standard 5 Indicator 7

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## Conclusions

Student load and class size enable teachers to effectively meet the learning needs of individual students.

School class sizes are reasonable. The average size is 19-24 students in core academic classes with slightly lower elective class sizes. Endicott survey results indicate over 62 percent of teachers, 85 percent of students, and 92 percent of parents agree that their total student caseload and individual class sizes enable them to meet the learning needs of individual students. With reasonable class sizes, there is engaging instruction with teachers checking in with students frequently for understanding and circling back to those who were experiencing difficulty. Students report that they enjoy their classes and receive consistent and flexible support from their teachers throughout the school day.

As a result of reasonable student caseloads and class sizes, teachers are able to effectively meet the learning needs of individual students across the school.

## Sources of Evidence

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

# Standard 5 Indicator 8

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## Conclusions

At times, the principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs and learning expectations.

The principal is new as of July 1, 2018. The principal uses data to make decisions about learning including enrollment numbers, class size, testing, grades, and performance. Prior administration has dealt with the reduction of positions (i.e., guidance, art, and technology) that affects student learning opportunities. The new principal is aware of these shortcomings and is actively seeking solutions. Overall, there are shifts in practice because with new administration comes new expectations. The principal is looking to the future with new graduation requirements from the state that tie to innovative practice, vision, and identity. The new principal is taking strides to be present in classes and at extracurricular activities. The new principal has a vision of student success that the faculty supports.

There have already been formal and informal discussions about improving student success. Teachers are beginning to implement the vision in their goals and instruction. The staff celebrates the academic success of students through AP and ECE courses, offering constant challenge to students through rigorous instruction. There are numerous community-based clubs that are celebrated throughout the building on bulletin boards, the television station, the radio station, and the school newspaper.

As the principal continues to work with other building leaders, provide instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, the vision, the mission, and the Berlin Learner Outcomes, there will be a clearer vision for teaching and learning and instructional leadership.

## Sources of Evidence

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

# Standard 5 Indicator 9

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## Conclusions

By design, teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promotes responsibility and ownership.

Parents and teachers report that the new principal is very involved in communicating with parents, students, and teachers. Parents feel that their concerns are addressed, students and faculty feel that the new principal has an open door policy that fosters a sense of ownership over decision-making practices and student success. The principal offers coffee hours and is present at numerous activities outside of school to allow interaction with stakeholders and students. Various committees allow for additional decision-making roles. These include the safety committee, leadership team, and booster clubs. Staff and parents report that personal connections within the school community and increased access to technology have created ownership of students' learning. Parents feel that teachers openly communicate with students and parents to ensure student success. Teachers often go the extra mile through tutoring and office hours and communicate via email, phone call, and conferences; counselors also encourage open dialogue between teachers and students for self-advocacy. Common planning time for teachers provides a vehicle to analyze data and implement change. Students and teachers report that the capstone project has been improved to include more application and higher expectations for students for authentic and higher level tasks. A new internship program was initiated by students and is supported by guidance.

Because teachers, students, and parents are increasingly involved in meaningful and designed roles that promote responsibility and ownership they are having a positive influence in the school.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teachers
- department leaders
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 5 Indicator 10

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## Conclusions

Across the school, teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning.

Teachers revise curriculum on an as-need basis. Common planning time is used to collaborate on data, assessment, teaching strategies, and best practice. The school offers a wide variety of ECE, AP, and elective courses to appeal to many students' interests and abilities. The use of Schoology by all teachers allows constant access to materials and lessons for students to increase engagement. Outside of department collaboration, core department heads, the leadership team, and faculty advisers create initiatives to drive learning. Teachers and the new principal agree on the importance of meaningful professional development. The new assistant superintendent has offered research-based professional development opportunities to staff. The new principal encourages staff members to choose their own professional development including visits to other schools. The teachers are hopeful that the new principal will continue to implement focused and meaningful initiatives with follow-through. The implementation of the motto "Purpose, Passion, and Pride" is beginning to pervade the students and faculty at the school by creating a positive school climate. The faculty is offering solutions to a lack of staffing in electives and guidance. They feel that the new principal's presence in classrooms and positive energy, ideas, and experience will lead to increased morale and performance. There is a clear sense of commitment to working together to improve the school overall.

As a result of teacher initiative and leadership through deliberate collaborative work with administrators, student engagement has increased.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 5 Indicator 11

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## Conclusions

The board of education (BOE), superintendent, and principal are extensively reflective and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations; however, collaboration is inconsistent.

The new superintendent previously held the position of assistant superintendent. The board of education knows and believes in his ability to lead the district as superintendent. The superintendent, assistant superintendent, and curriculum leadership acknowledge more work needs to be done to align the Berlin Learner Outcomes with the vision and mission statement work done in preparation for NEASC and the rubrics used by teachers. Timing for the development of these initiatives was impacted by leadership changes at the building and at the central office. With the prior administrators, the relationship between the school board, superintendent, and principal was ineffective; however, under new leadership, there have been immediate improvements. The principal has shared a vision focused on student success and structural strategies for all disciplines and all students. All parties seem hopeful that the new administrative teams throughout the district will work together to improve student success and to achieve 21st century learning expectations. BOE members clearly support technology initiatives and training. Recently, various committees created the Berlin Learner Outcomes, the school-wide rubrics, the core values and beliefs, and most recently the district's new motto.

When the school board, superintendent, and principal engage the school community in developing common language in order to align the various district documents, there will be a clear and cohesive vision of the 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school board
- community members
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 5 Indicator 12

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## Conclusions

By design, the school board and the superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school.

The previous administration believed in carrying out the board of education policies, rules, and regulations. It was his responsibility to report to the superintendent for all activities. The Endicott survey states that 23 percent of the faculty agree that the BOE and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. Teachers' perceptions of the previous administration's authority was limited to restructuring the bell schedule, carrying out the evaluation plan, and completing initial budgeting. Teachers see the board and the superintendent as more budget-focused than supportive of student learning and success; specific examples include not running ECE or AP courses due to numbers and loss of college career pathway credits through Tunxis Community College. In contrast, with the new administration in place, teacher perceptions have changed. The superintendent reports that ideas for initiatives come from both the central office and the schools. The superintendent stated that he has not only given the new principal full authority to run the school and believes that she will move the school forward, but will also be supportive and responsive to her principles, initiatives, and vision. Teachers report they have confidence in their new principal, that she will listen to them and do what is best for teachers and students.

Because the school board and superintendent consistently provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority, the principal is able to effectively lead the school.

## Sources of Evidence

- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- school board
- community members
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 5 Commendations

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## Commendation

The participation of one-third of the study body in the Upbeat program that provides opportunities for student leadership, community involvement, and a sense of pride and purpose in the school community

## Commendation

The high participation rate in extracurricular activities

## Commendation

The positive behavior of the student body

## Commendation

The numerous and wide range of engaging and heterogeneously grouped elective classes

## Commendation

The access to curriculum through numerous co-taught and modified curriculum classes

## Commendation

The personalization of professional development by the new building principal

## Commendation

The revision of the capstone to include more rigor and real-world application requiring students to obtain information outside of the school

## Commendation

The numerous opportunities for seniors to successfully complete the capstone project and the role most educators play in this success

## Commendation

The funding of professional development by the BOE



## **Commendation**

The increasingly collaborative process of teacher evaluation

The highly supportive teachers as articulated by students and parents

The reasonable class sizes

The vision of the new school leadership team

The open forum office hours and coffee hours offered by the principal to obtain relevant feedback about the school from all stakeholders, including parents

The numerous opportunities to earn college credits through ECE and AP courses

The creation of district-wide Berlin Learner Outcomes by a BOE sub-committee

The renewed effort to collaborate among the BOE, superintendent, and principal

The decision-making authority and autonomy provide to the principal to lead the school

# Standard 5 Recommendations

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## Recommendation

Expand efforts to build cultural awareness and understanding of the diversity of learners at the school and implement cultural competency into instructional practices

## Recommendation

Ensure equitable and inclusive access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations

## Recommendation

Ensure that each student has an adult who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations

## Recommendation

Ensure the supervision and evaluation is a collaborative process that is thoughtfully designed to improve instruction and student learning

## Recommendation

Ensure that the career planning and programming needs for all students are being met, especially students who plan to enter directly into the workforce after high school

## Recommendation

Ensure sufficient leadership in all departments, especially where department chair positions have been eliminated

## Recommendation

Ensure sufficient and consistent collaboration time, such as CPT, for all teachers to engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis in order to improve student learning

## Recommendation

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**Recommendation**

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**Recommendation**

# Standard 6 Indicator 1

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## Conclusions

The school often implements timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Berlin High School offers a variety of intervention opportunities and programming options for all students. There is an at-risk team, comprised of one assistant principal, the school counseling supervisor, and the three school counselors, that meets weekly to review the progress of students or to identify students needing extra supports. Typically, these at-risk students are identified through PowerSchool generated reports regarding attendance and grades. Following the at-risk meeting, next steps can include communication with relevant professionals including teachers, nurse, school social worker, school psychologist, and reading specialists to determine appropriate interventions and recommending or referring students to programs that are available within Berlin High School. The at-risk team attempts to ensure adequate and appropriate interventions for students, including parent meetings, staffing, and various academic accommodations. However, while the at-risk team meets regularly there is no procedure identified to guide teacher or parent referrals.

Individual concerns by teachers or parents happen informally with no procedure or follow-up protocols. There is also a lack of cohesive understanding of SRBI interventions. Currently, there are no formal SRBI interventions by Tier 1, 2, and 3 identified. There is also no reporting or tracking process to record intervention steps. Further, there is no formal or informal communication of the intervention processes to staff. Berlin High School does offer numerous opportunities for intervention but they are happening in silos and lack a cohesive plan.

Berlin High School offers structured study halls that struggling students can be scheduled into for help and oversight by a certified teacher. There is also an after-school academy staffed by certified teachers four days a week. A late bus is provided to Berlin residents as well as Open Choice students who stay to participate in the after-school academy. There is a writing center that is staffed by Berlin High School students who are trained in peer conferencing. The writing center is open for appointments throughout the school day and after school. The upBeat program offers peer tutoring and mentoring before school, throughout the day and after school. There are also programming options available to students ranging from ESS to an Alternate Academic Program. The Effective School Solutions program (ESS) is available for students identified with either an IEP or 504. The ESS program is available for students who are currently struggling to find success and require therapeutic intervention and services. ESS offers individual therapeutic programming, group therapy, family counseling, as well as parent support and educational meetings. The ESS program is a contracted outside program housed at Berlin High School and allows therapists to collaborate with teachers and support staff. The Alternate Academic Program (AAP), provides general education, 504, and IEP students the opportunity to receive counseling as well as self-contained math, English and structured study classes. Students in AAP select and attend the rest of their classes in a traditional setting, with the support of AAP as their foundation. The STEP program provides an alternative, self-contained setting for special education students. It is an individualized program that offers work-study and modified school day with the ultimate goal of cycling back into mainstream learning.

While Berlin High School offers timely and directive intervention strategies which support students, when the school also has a coordinated approach to referring students and articulating, recommending, and implementing interventions, all students, including identified and at-risk students, will be assured of the support they need to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study

- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- central office personnel

# Standard 6 Indicator 2

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## Conclusions

The school often provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services.

The school uses an assortment of methods to communicate to families the support services that are available to students. According to the Endicott survey, 79.8 percent of students agree or strongly agree that they know who to ask for help at school if they have a personal problem. In addition, 78 percent of parents agree or strongly agree that the school provides information about available student support services such as school counseling, library/media, health, ESOL, and special education to all families. The school's website provides a wealth of information on school programs including support services programs that can be viewed with multilingual options. However, while the information is available online, it can be hard to locate. Other online communication the school uses include daily announcement emails parents can sign up to receive as well as PowerSchool notification emails when students grades change or to notify parents of student absences. Further, a school goal requires teachers to notify parents when a student's grade drop to a C- or below. The school counseling department maintains a department Instagram apprising students and families of events and programs. More traditional communication methods are also employed by the school including the availability of brochures and handouts. Every open choice family receives a hard copy letter detailing school services and transportation options.

When the school consistently and deliberately provides information to families especially to those most in need about available student support services, then all students will be able to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 6 Indicator 3

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## Conclusions

Support services staff consistently use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.

The Google Suite is used extensively to deliver a range of services to students including communicating among staff, students, and parents with Google mail. Google Calendar is used to schedule meetings, remind students of appointments, deadline, and school-related events and opportunities. Schoology is used by every staff member to communicate classroom instruction, expectations, and assignments. Schoology integrates with PowerSchool to provide teachers their grading platform. Powerschool is used by all staff and support service personnel to record, report, and view grades and attendance records of all students. Further Powerschool is used to track data of individual student progress as well as assignment-specific holistic data. As PowerSchool updates in real-time, parents have immediate access to students current academic progress. The school counseling department uses Naviance in a variety of ways including to administer student interest surveys, conduct college research, plan college visits, request teacher letters of recommendation and complete the common application when applying to colleges. IEP Direct via Frontline Education is utilized by special education staff members to create, view, and edit/revise IEP as well as to schedule IEP meetings to ensure state and federal compliance.

As a result of consistently utilizing technology, staff are able to effectively deliver a wide range of services to meet the needs of all students.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- students
- school support staff

# Standard 6 Indicator 4

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## Conclusions

The school's counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who endeavor to deliver a written, developmental program; meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling; engage in individual meetings with all students; occasionally conduct group meetings; deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers as well as use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

While the counseling staff is admirably trying to maintain a high level of services, the loss of a counseling position has limited the effectiveness and potential of the counseling department. The school counseling department is comprised of three counselors and one school counseling supervisor who serve 900 students. There is one full-time secretary who provides clerical support for all school counselors, including the district school counseling supervisor. The three school counselors maintain a caseload of approximately 270 students and the district counseling supervisor (K-12) is responsible for a reduced caseload of 100 students. Berlin's caseloads represent the highest in comparison to their Demographic Reference Group (DRG), which averages a 230:1 student-to-counselor ratio. Prior to the reduction of a counselor in the 2017-2018 school year, counselors were mandated to meet with individual students three times per school year. After the reduction in staffing, the school mandate was reduced to two student meetings per year.

Currently, the guidance staff maintains the implementation of their written curriculum by occasionally pushing into students content area classes. Additionally, counselors have been working to implement a formalized senior internship program. As time permits, counselors meet individually with students, at least two times per year, but have had to suspend group sessions due to time limitations. School counselors spend a significant amount of time meeting individually with students to select and schedule appropriate classes for freshmen through junior students. They also spend a considerable amount of time meeting with seniors on post-secondary planning. In addition, school counselors have to flexibly alter their schedules to complete crisis intervention and facilitate community and area mental health referrals.

While school counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who deliver a written, developmental program, meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling, engage in individual meetings with all students, deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers, use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations; when school counseling services also have the capacity to conduct sufficient individual meeting with students and consistent group meetings, students will be assured of the support they need to achieve the school's expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

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



# Standard 6 Indicator 5

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## Conclusions

The school's health services consistently have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who provide preventative health services and direct intervention services, use an appropriate referral process, conduct ongoing student health assessments, and use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

The school health services center provides a wide range of services to students. The health service office is staffed by two registered nurses. The nurses attend to general student health concerns, sports clearances, new student health clearances, field trip clearance, attend field trips, dispense medication as appropriate, attend PPT and 504 meetings when requested, as well as communicate to appropriate staff including school counseling staff, school resource officers, teachers, coaches and administrators about student health issues as well as communicates with parents regarding student health issues and concerns.

Although there is currently no formalized program, the Berlin High School nurses work consistently and collaboratively to ensure interventions are made when a concern is expressed about a student. To that end, school nurses regularly informally conference with counseling staff and teachers when concerns are raised about the health and well-being of an individual student. In addition to the two registered nurses, Berlin employs an athletic trainer to work with student-athletes. The athletic trainer is on-site for the majority of Berlin sporting events to administer immediate health interventions. The athletic trainer and health service personnel work collaboratively to monitor and implement a concussion protocol and execute re-entry plans for students when returning to academics and athletics.

The health suite was designed specifically to address the needs of students including ambulance access, proximity to administration, and privacy. Two private restrooms provide comfort and security for transgender students. There is a room specifically to support students with diabetes that contains all of the necessary materials for students to store, test, and monitor insulin levels. Additionally, there is another service room designed for student privacy. On average 60-70 students visit Berlin health service a day for issues ranging from collecting elevator keys, receiving medication, sports related injuries, and general health concerns. Students are comfortable visiting the health services as evidenced by the results of the Endicott survey; of the 805 students surveyed, 81.9 percent agree that they are comfortable going to the school nurse and only 4.7 percent disagrees.

As a result of adequately staffed and responsive health services personnel, Berlin High school students are provided a variety of services and interventions that promote overall well-being.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- facility tour
- students
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website

# Standard 6 Indicator 6

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## Conclusions

Library/media services are integrated often into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel support staff who are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum; provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school curriculum; ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school; are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning; conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

The library/media specialist (LMS) and technology integration specialist (TIS) work as a team to collaborate and support all faculty, staff, and students and engage in the implementation of the school's curriculum and provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum. The print collection includes 11,000 books; 59 periodicals are available for staff and students. Teachers may sign up for a designated area of the library independently by using the online access calendar. Services are also communicated through all G-Suite platforms. All online resources are available to the school community through off-site licenses accessible from the library/media center website.

Students and staff can contact the LMS and TIS through messaging on Schoology or via email, particularly when school is not in session and students need research or technology assistance. The TIS and LMS visit classes to deliver instruction and support as well as to welcome all students into the library space. They influence district and building curricular goals by supporting student and classroom needs through the 1:1 technology initiative. The library has multiple collaborative areas for students and teachers to use, including a designated classroom space, equipped with an interactive whiteboard and 24 desktop iMacs. The TIS manages the distribution and repair of all student Chromebooks, ensuring that students have a working device at all times, and support the explicit instruction of best practices for using the school's student learning management system. Students are provided a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services to support their learning needs. The library has two levels, a main floor and a mezzanine. The mezzanine has a Virtual Reality room and a flex space that is utilized at times as a yoga studio as part of the Physical Education curriculum. Students have access to the library database from home, and they have library cards to use the public library. The school library subscribes to multiple subject-specific and general information subscription databases. These resources are provided in addition to access to and instruction in using the numerous databases available to students and staff through the Connecticut State Library. The library/media center has a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum including a physical setting that encourages collaboration among students, opportunities for inquiry, and authentic learning. The LMS assesses student and teacher needs and budgets accordingly to support learning through online databases, periodicals, and books available to all students in multiple formats.

Because there are an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff, library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices, therefore, students have the opportunity to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- facility tour
- students
- school website

# Standard 6 Indicator 7

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## Conclusions

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

The school offers myriad programs and interventions as support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners. There are ten full-time special education teachers, one K-12 ESOL teacher, one part-time ESOL instructional tutor, one full-time speech and language pathologist, two full-time licensed social workers and, one full-time psychologist. The district also employs one board-certified behavioral analyst (K-12), one consulting psychiatrist (K-12), one part-time (K-12) occupational therapist/assistive technology specialist, and one part-time (K-12) physical therapist, one special education director, one special education supervisor (6-12), and two K-12 secretaries. Berlin has also contracted Effective School Solutions to work within the district. ESS provides two licensed mental health professionals who offer support services for IEP and 504 students. There are also ten full-time paraprofessionals who work with students in mainstream classes and special education programs.

Berlin High School offers three distinct programs for identified students: STEP, Pathways, and AAP. The STEP program, success in transition, education, and personal growth, is available for students with an IEP. STEP is a programmatic intervention for students with social/emotional needs. This program is staffed with a special education teacher and is primarily self-contained. The STEP program offers students individualized academic support based on student needs as well as the ability to participate in work-study opportunities, enroll in online courses to meet graduation requirements, and the opportunity to enroll in mainstream classes.

The Pathways program is designed to meet the needs of students with autism. Students attend mainstreamed classes based on their academic ability. The Pathway's program is staffed with one special education teacher, one social worker, one speech and language pathologist, and three paraprofessionals. Students receive social and life skills in a classroom setting and participate in a work-study program. Students in the Pathway's program run the school's coffee shop, Berlin Grounds. Additionally, Pathway students participate in community outings to practice practical skills.

AAP, the Alternative Academic Program, is opened to general education students, 504 students, and students with an IEP. AAP is a partially self-contained program with students taking English, math, and a structured study hall together. The AAP offers co-taught classes staffed with a special education teacher as well as regular education content area teacher. In addition, the AAP program is supported with group therapy sessions with a Berlin High School social worker and a dedicated guidance counselor.

Additionally, Berlin offers Effective School Solutions, a program that is available for students identified with either an IEP or 504. The ESS program is available for students who are currently struggling to find success and require therapeutic intervention and services. ESS offers individual therapeutic programming, group therapy, family counseling, as well as parent support and educational meetings. The ESS program is a contracted outside program housed at Berlin High School and allows therapists to collaborate with teachers and support staff.

Within programs, teachers meet in interdisciplinary teams (IDTs). There is an IDT for the Berlin High School special education department, the Alternative Academic Program, the Pathway program, the Success in Transitions Education and Personal Growth Program (STEP), and the Effective School Solutions program (ESS). IDTs meet weekly and are comprised of an administrator and staff participating in the program as well as other staff members as needed. For students receiving special education services, the grades 6-12 special education supervisor or an assistant principal coordinates all referrals. The ten special education teachers serve as case managers to ensure that the planning and placement team (PPT) meetings are held within time frames determined by federal regulations. For students receiving support through Section 504, school counselors

coordinate all referrals, as well as annual review meetings to ensure adherence to timeframes determined by district policy.

Although Berlin High School offers a variety of programming as support services, especially for identified students, there are not clearly defined sequential steps in the processes developed to implement intervention measures, the programs lack clear enrollment criteria and lack data collection for the aforementioned programs.

As a result of adequate staffing and specific programming, support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners strongly support and provide opportunities for success for all learners.

## **Sources of Evidence**

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

# Standard 6 Commendations

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## Commendation

The wide variety of intervention opportunities that target a wide variety of learners

## Commendation

The timely and comprehensive intervention by ESS

## Commendation

The after-school academy that provides additional academic support to students

## Commendation

The offering of transportation services for after-school Berlin students and open choice students

## Commendation

The professionalism of the staff to identify and respond to student intervention needs

## Commendation

The health services office that is a warm and inviting space and that provides a comfortable welcoming environment offering privacy and safety for students

## Commendation

The use of social media to communicate with parents and students

## Commendation

The dedication of staff to communicate with parents and students

## Commendation

The use of integrated platforms such as IEP Direct and Powerschool

## **Commendation**

The provision of a high level of school counseling services

The dedication and commitment of school counselors to support all students, parents, and faculty

The integration of school health services personnel into the school community

The commitment of nurses to provide high quality care

The accessibility of the library/media center before and after school

The representation of student choice in e-book purchases

The Berlin Grounds student staffed coffee shop

The high level of technical support provided by student techsperts

The development and implementation of a successful website in the library that builds school-wide connection within curriculums

The use of assessment data to inform program goals for the library/media center

The wide range of materials to support the school's curriculum and support independent learning provided by the library/media center

# Standard 6 Recommendations

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## Recommendation

Develop a process for teacher and parent referrals to the at-risk team

## Recommendation

Ensure faculty voice on the at-risk team

## Recommendation

Develop, maintain, and inform staff of intervention options to ensure a coordinated approach and avoid inconsistent delivery of tiered interventions

## Recommendation

Establish a formal process to identify students for academic interventions

## Recommendation

Streamline accessibility information to student information resources for parents

## Recommendation

Ensure the various digital platforms currently in use are effective and efficient in daily operations

## Recommendation

Ensure continuous funding for the library/media center and update materials with regards to age and relevance

## Recommendation

Ensure there are an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who deliver a written, developmental program; meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling; engage in individual and group meetings with all students; deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers; and use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations

## Recommendation

## Recommendation



# Standard 7 Indicator 1

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## Conclusions

The school community and the Berlin board of education adequately provide dependable funding for a wide range of school programs and services, sufficient professional and support staff, ongoing professional development and curriculum revision, a full range of technology support, sufficient equipment, and sufficient instructional materials and supplies.

The school offers a wide range of programs and services. Special education programs exist such as Success in Transitions, Education and Personal Growth (STEP) and Post-Secondary Transition. The high school employs a full-time speech pathologist. One school counselor position has been eliminated due to budget cuts which has affected the level of service provided to students. The K-12 school counseling department head has a caseload of 100 students. The school has three school counselors who have a caseload of approximately 270. Despite this, school counselors have taken on extra work to still deliver adequate programming to students. Two school social workers are available to meet with IEP, 504, and regular education students. All but five department heads (English, math, science, social studies, and guidance) have been eliminated. Funding for the external Effective School Solutions (ESS) program is not dependable but has been funded in recent years. Two ESS social workers provide services for students in the ESS program. All other professional and support staff are sufficient with three full-time administrators, thirteen paraprofessionals, two nurses, twelve support staff, nine custodians, one SRO, one day time security paraprofessional, and one evening time security guard to secure the front lobby. The faculty consists of 98 certified staff members.

The school has adequate funding to provide ongoing professional development. The district supports professional development scheduled on five full days and thirteen 2.5 hour time blocks. School counselors and social workers have access to relevant professional development. During the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years, nine different consultants were hired to provide professional development related to curriculum revision. Presenters included Heidi Hayes Jacobs, Melissa Root, and Gina Kostyum along with webinars.

The district provides a full range of technology support. All students have Chromebooks. Every teacher has a desktop Mac and MacBook. Every classroom has a SMARTBoard. Most classrooms have a docu-reader or have access to one. IT support for student Chromebooks is offered in the library/media center by one technology integration specialist and one integrated technology person. A former IT student helper who has graduated was hired for 15 hours a week to offer additional support. There are current student helpers available as tech experts (techsperts) for their independent research class. There is a need for one more integrated technology professional. The district offers dependable technology funding. The school utilizes Schoology and Google Apps for Education Suite. Staff uses Atlas Rubricon to access and update curriculum.

The school has extensive equipment. The school has a radio broadcasting studio, TV studio, 1:1 student Chromebook ratio, a virtual reality classroom, mobile MacBook carts for special education, eight mobile MacBook labs, two hardwired Apple labs for technical education classes with 3D printers, an automotive shop, a woodworking shop, and a welding shop. The amounts budgeted for the last three years do not address the capital budget needs for technical education equipment. Much of the extensive equipment in the school has been funded through end-of-year surplus funds. Equipment maintenance and updates are addressed on an as-need basis.

Routine building and grounds maintenance plans are developed by the district building operator. The school does not have its own capital equipment budget but each department has a line for equipment improvement. Non-core departments without a department head communicate budget needs to an assistant principal. The school consistently supplies instructional materials and supplies. Amounts budgeted for the past two years indicate a decrease from \$655,000.00 for the 2017-2018 fiscal year to \$595,000.00 for the 2018-2019 fiscal year allotted for instructional supplies district-wide. Although the budget has indicated a decrease of \$60,000.00, teachers do not report a decrease in the quantity or quality of instructional materials within the school. The board of education has maintained a budget with a zero percent increase for instructional supplies for at least the last three years.

The board of education is able to provide adequate, dependable funding for program personnel, professional development, and curriculum revision, when the board also provides the planned capital funding for technology equipment and building equipment, students' ability to achieve 21st century learning expectations will be fully supported.

## **Sources of Evidence**

- self-study
- facility tour
- teachers
- students
- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 7 Indicator 2

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## Conclusions

The school develops, plans, and funds programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant, to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment, and to keep the vast majority of the school clean on a daily basis.

As reported in the Endicott survey, the majority of students, faculty, and parents agree that the school is clean and well maintained. The director of business operations oversees the maintenance and repair of the building by creating schedules for the high school's custodial staff and facilitating their training and management. There is a schedule to ensure that routine maintenance is completed and proactive. All district custodial and maintenance staff receive OSHA-approved safety training on an annual basis from the director of environmental services. The director of business operations is also responsible for purchasing supplies and equipment and creating the budget for the high school and middle school facilities. All major facilities equipment is maintained and replaced based on a plan developed by the building maintenance director. The assistant principals meet on a weekly basis with the principal and also meet as needed with the director of building maintenance to review the scheduled maintenance and repair orders to be completed. All requests for needed repairs are submitted electronically by teachers and staff, and work orders are submitted electronically by the high school's assistant principals with input from the principal, which is intended to enhance the timeliness of all maintenance work orders and repairs. There is currently no funding plan for maintenance of the building, equipment repair, and replacement. Building maintenance and equipment repair and replacement are currently addressed on an as-needed basis. There are two daytime custodians and seven night custodians. Although the school is reported as and appears to be clean, it is difficult for custodians to keep up with the day-to-day cleaning and upkeep. There is a plan to hire a head custodian who will work the day shift.

While the school is clean on a daily basis, when the school develops, plans, and funds programs to ensure the cataloguing of equipment and a schedule for future building maintenance, then the long term physical environment will continue to be conducive to teaching and learning.

## Sources of Evidence

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

# Standard 7 Indicator 3

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## Conclusions

The community consistently funds, but lacks a long-term plan for, programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements.

The school plans to support programs and services for identified students through currently employed personnel. There are two full-time social workers who service the needs of students with IEPs, 504s, and the general education population. The school also has one full-time school psychologist who carries out all testing and evaluations for students enrolled in or considered for special education intervention. The speech and language pathologist also provides speech and language services to students recommended by the planning and placement team (PPT) or the 504 teams. The pupil personnel services (PPS) department at the school has contracted with Effective School Solutions (ESS). ESS has two full-time social workers who provide counseling services to a small, specific population of school avoidant students and their families. ESS also provides services to the participants of the Success in Transitions, Education, and Personal Growth (STEP) Program. Budget cuts have caused a reduction in staff eliminating a school counselor, five department heads, a technology education teacher, an art teacher, and a day-time security guard.

There are no long-range plans for anticipated enrollment changes, staffing needs, facility needs, technology, or capital improvements. Although no long term plans exist, there are short-term plans to address enrollment, programs and services, and capital needs created on an annual, as-needed basis. Cleaning equipment and outside maintenance machinery are cleaned and maintained on an as-needed schedule. Classroom and cafeteria furniture is repaired or replaced on an annual basis as part of the routine maintenance plan. In spite of the recent renovations, there are still needs within the facility, capital improvements, and building improvements. Air quality within the building has been of concern.

When long-range plans for programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements are developed and implemented, then the students will be able to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

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

# Standard 7 Indicator 4

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## Conclusions

The school's faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget.

The school's budget process begins in mid-October during which administration asks department heads to begin working with their departments to assess needs. The departments that do not have a department head work collaboratively with the assistant principals to determine needs. Each department is given its budget for the last three years and a guiding worksheet for new needs and estimated costs. Based on this information the principal determines the high school needs for supplies, textbooks, and resources. Over the last three years, the board of education has faced cuts from the town council. As a result, the board of education has begun to work collaboratively with schools to take a proactive approach and better frame the needs of the schools to the community in order to better support the needs of the schools. The principal noted that the administration is compiling data and information on the resources they need to maximize learning in their newly renovated building. This new approach is creating more direct contact between the principal and the community members. The principal and instructional leaders have current and regularly updated information on the status of their budget allocations via the school bookkeeper.

When the budgetary support of community and town council members is deliberate and consistent, then the students' will be able to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- school board
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 7 Indicator 5

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## Conclusions

The school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services in most areas.

The school has extensive appropriate space to ensure full implementation of the educational program. A full renovation of the school was completed in February 2017. On the Endicott survey, approximately 73 percent of staff agree that the school site and plant support the delivery of high quality programs and services. Nearly 88 percent of parents feel that the school's physical plant is conducive to education, and approximately 82 percent of students feel that the school's facility adequately supports its programs and services. The school has a TV studio, radio broadcasting center, virtual reality room, fully functioning culinary classroom kitchens, a child daycare room, two gymnasiums, two visual arts studios with ceramics equipment and a kiln, a workout room, a theater stage, STEM-equipped classrooms, woodshop, automotive shop, and two hardwired Apple computer labs for technology education courses with 3D printers.

There are also designated rooms for the STEP, ESS, autism programs, and the Berlin Grounds coffee shop. The guidance office holds six counselor offices, a conference room, administrative assistant work space, and a common area for students. There are six copiers located on the first floor and six located on the second floor. There are seven teacher workrooms within the building. There are 13 custodial and storage areas within the building. However, the storerooms do not have any material safety data sheets. There is ample room for meetings with five designated conference rooms in the building. There are two mezzanine rooms available for multiple uses.

The library/media center experienced a withdraw of 7,000 books during the school renovation, less than 1,000 books were added back after the renovation. Efforts are being made to replenish this stock. There are extensive databases available through the library/media center. The nurse's office has four cots in the middle area, two more private rooms with cots, and an office area for the nurses. The video amp room also provides another space for larger groups to meet or to host guest speakers.

The average class size in the school is 21 students and teachers are assigned their own classroom. The classrooms and furnishings are mostly conducive to learning. Some classrooms exceed the design occupancy limit (DOL) which may violate ADA requirements. The family and consumer science, special education, art department classrooms have top loading or stacked washers and dryers which violate the ADA requirements. The cafeteria and student dining services are appropriate in size and adequately equipped. Concerns around main water lines breakage exist. There have been several recent breakages that have been addressed immediately but there is no long term plan to prevent future breakages. There are also concerns about odors in the building at times. The board of education has not yet taken possession of the building from the Building Commission.

There are practice athletic fields and tennis courts located at the school with full athletic fields available at Sage Park where student-athletes are bussed to after school. Swimmers practice at the Meriden YMCA and divers practice at Plainville High. Transportation to these buildings is provided. Ample parking exists for faculty and junior and senior students. Students use the gym entrance in the morning and staff enter through the main lobby. Two courtyards exist at the school. One is used for senior privileges as a place to meet and eat lunch when weather permits. The other houses the greenhouse for instructional purposes. There is also a classroom dedicated to the school's upBeat program.

Because the school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services in most areas, students are supported as they strive to achieve the 21st learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 7 Indicator 6

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## Conclusions

The school inconsistently maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and is occasionally out of compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.

The most recent documented fire code inspections to the state were complete. In addition, the board of education policies, for example, the asbestos management plan or policy on green cleaning support, are in compliance with local, state, and federal policies in the areas of health and safety. Records of compliance with state regulations are kept in a variety of locations. These include the central office, the maintenance director's office, and the main office of the school. The science department maintains an inventory of their supplies as well as Safety Data Sheet (SDS) or Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) in the Flinn system. All teachers review safety regulations with students at the beginning of each school year. In addition, the science paraprofessional is a certified scientist who maintains the chemical records and logs. The chemical hygiene officer is by default the superintendent of schools who works with the science department head and school administrators to ensure compliance. Custodial staff is not able to articulate where the MSDS/SDS for cleaning supplies are located. The MSDS/SDS was not found in the building. While all areas of the building have adequate ventilation and temperature control, air quality is a concern as the building has been evacuated due to gasoline smells from the auto technology classes.

All parts of the building are handicap accessible, but the access is not clearly labeled. For example, the ramp from the student parking lot to the main entrance is not clearly marked. The school has blue emergency lights in large gathering areas as well as classrooms that can be loud or have noise canceling technology such as choir, woodshop classes, the cafeteria, and gyms. This light flashes when an emergency is called to alert students and staff in a manner that does not require sound. In addition, all classroom doors are required to remain locked at all times as an added level of security and time saving measure in the event of a lockdown. In addition, maximum occupancy signs have been posted in the auditorium, A-gym, and B-gym, however, are not posted in the cafeteria, media center, or video amphitheater. Tools for School Committee on air quality for the district has not convened for several years. As a result, teachers are not aware of a current process for hearing comments and concerns about school maintenance as it relates to the issues of health or safety from students, staff, and community members.

When the school maintains thorough documentation of all safety guidelines of cleaning supplies and provides a method for students, staff, and community members to express comments and concerns about school maintenance, then students will be assured of a safe and healthy learning environment.

## Sources of Evidence

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



# Standard 7 Indicator 7

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## Conclusions

All professional staff are committed to consistently engaging parents and families as partners in each student's education and frequently reach out to those families who have been less connected with the school.

The school sends daily announcements through the Daily Bulletin on PowerSchool to all registered parents. Flyers and email blasts are also sent out to parents regularly. Teachers are required to call home when students' grades drop below 70 percent. Teachers are also asked to make one positive contact home per month per student. This is related to teachers SLOs. A new initiative this year is to make four positive contacts for every one negative contact made home. The Endicott survey of staff shows that 82.1 percent agree with the statement, Professional staff actively engages parents and families as partners in each student's education. The Endicott survey shows that 61.8 percent of parents agree, Professional staff actively engages parents and family as partners in my son's/daughter's education. This difference in opinion has been addressed in the school-wide goals for the past several years. School counselors host parent evenings and invite all junior parents to the junior planning meetings. The school website is regularly updated with school news and upcoming events. The district uses an automated system to send important information by computerized phone calls or emails to all families in the school. Parents can view their students' grades, attendance, and upcoming assignments through PowerSchool. School counselors make phone calls home when concerns with students arise. Parent-teacher conferences are held after school four times a year. At parent-teacher conferences, there are computers set up for parents to register with the school's email blast system and PowerSchool. Parents are invited to attend the Senior Capstone Night. The business department invites parent guest speakers to discuss various business topics. The upBeat group has had parents volunteer for workshops with students, and it also holds an annual Adult Training Workshop, which provides information to parents and community members on issues relevant to adolescents. The school hosts coffee hours for parents to visit the school but the timing of those have not been very accommodating of parent work schedules. One of the school counselors acts as a designated liaison for the Open Choice program. Open Choice families and parents are included on email blasts for Berlin and Hartford events. Before the start of the school year, Open Choice liaisons hold a family orientation in Berlin for families of incoming freshmen that did not attend McGee Middle School. Transportation is provided for families when they need to attend conferences, PPTs, or parent meetings.

Because connections are made with all parents and families, especially those who are less connected with the school, all students have the opportunity to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- parents
- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 7 Indicator 8

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## Conclusions

The school pervasively develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support learning.

The school's technology education department's advisory board has ensured formal business and industry partnerships with several community colleges and universities, productive partnerships with the community and local construction trades, manufacturing, and communications businesses. Students can enroll in Advanced Placement, University of Connecticut Early College Experience, and Tunxis Community College courses completed at the school. Math and science independent studies are offered through online courses with the University of North Dakota. Some students also participate in University of New York's high school programs on Saturdays. An opportunity to take a college-level course is also offered through Wesleyan University.

The school counseling department also holds information sessions for parents regarding financial aid and hosts various career seminars for students where members of the community volunteer to speak about their careers. Students have the opportunity to participate in programs such as college visits and college fairs. Each year, the guidance department also hosts an accepted student day, where an admissions representative from Tunxis Community College meets with students and grants them immediate acceptance to the school. Currently, there are three students participating in internships with the plans to grow to twelve. Partnerships are built with outside organizations to build develop these positions. The upBeat peer leadership program includes approximately 300 students who work directly with community partners including the Berlin Lions Club as well as numerous other community partnerships. Students are divided into houses based on interest and then reach out to their matching community partners.

Berlin Public Schools also holds a Berlin Education Council, which consists of school, parent, and town representatives. This council meets three times throughout the year to discuss the current status of the schools. The discussion is opened up to suggestions from members of the council. The school departments and programs extensively seek out business, community, and parent partnerships in order to enhance the current programs in place. Departments and programs that partner with business, the community, and parents initiate communication on at least a quarterly basis.

As the school continues to actively nurture parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships, then all students will be able to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

## Sources of Evidence

- teachers
- students
- parents
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

# Standard 7 Commendations

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## Commendation

The 1:1 technology ratio of Chromebooks for every student

## Commendation

The wide range of programs and services to support students' needs

## Commendation

The adequate funding for ongoing curriculum revision and professional development

## Commendation

The district's provision of a full range of technology support

## Commendation

The TV studio and radio station which provide learning opportunities for students

## Commendation

The active involvement of building administrators and department heads and the inclusion of teacher voice in the budget process

## Commendation

The ESS, AAP, STEP, and Pathways programs

## Commendation

The renovated school building which provides a full range of spaces to implement an extensive variety of educational programs, as well as a health services suite, administration and counseling offices, and conference rooms

## Commendation

The dedication of the custodial staff and daily maintenance of the school building

## **Commendation**

The full-time PPS support services

The proactive approach of the board of education

The blue light visual warning system for alerting a safety situation

The appropriate integration of technology for parent contact

The transportation provided for open choice students

The work of the technical education advisory board

The Berlin Education Council

The in school and out of school programming with Junior Achievement

# Standard 7 Recommendations

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## Recommendation

Expand communication of educational needs in the community

## Recommendation

Develop more personalized methods of communication with homes and families, including strategies to engage families who are less connected to the school

## Recommendation

Develop and implement a capital improvement budget and plan

## Recommendation

Explore opportunities to more fully include departments without department heads and the community in the school budget process

## Recommendation

Address all ADA and ensure the school complies with all state and federal laws for fire, health, and safety regulations

## Recommendation

Designate a school chemical hygiene officer, and ensure MSDS/SDS sheets are appropriately accessible

## Recommendation

Formalize internship and job shadowing opportunities for all students and strengthen and expand partnerships with businesses, colleges, technical schools and community organizations

## Recommendation

Develop and implement a funding plan for the maintenance of the building and equipment repair and replacement

## Recommendation

Provide for custodial leadership and a system to process and delineate work order requests to ensure the continuation of regular cleaning and maintenance of the building and efficient use of custodial staff

## **Recommendation**

# **FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

A school's initial/continued accreditation is based on satisfactory progress implementing valid recommendations of the visiting team and others identified by the Commission as it monitors the school's progress and changes which occur at the school throughout the decennial cycle. To monitor the school's progress in the Follow-Up Program, the Commission requires that the principal submit routine 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 team recommendations by the time the Five-Year Progress Report is submitted. The Commission may request additional Special Progress Reports if one or more of the Standards are not being met in a satisfactory manner or if additional information is needed on matters relating to evaluation report recommendations or substantive changes in the school.

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

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

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

# **SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY**

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

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

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



# Roster of Team Members

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## Chair(s)

**Chair: Dr. Jeffrey Schumann** - New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.

## Team Members

**Haifa Abdel-Jalil** - Hill Regional Career Magnet High School

**Julia Barnett** - Enfield High School

**Susan Biren** - Edwin O. Smith High School

**Dr. Maureen Brummett** - Plainville Community Schools

**Kelsey Burns** - Jonathan Law High School

**Monica Kreuzer** - Amity Regional Senior High School

**Alicia Loesche** - Branford High School

**Edward Manfredi** - Farmington High School

**Mike Murphy** - Pomperaug High School

**Stephanie Sanzo** - Newington High School

**Bethany Wagner** - Plainfield High School

**Ann Wellspeak** - Cheshire High School

**Vincent Wynne** - Ansonia High School

**Kumadine Yapa** - Wilby High School