

New England Association of Schools and Colleges



Commission on Public Secondary Schools

Report of the Visiting Committee for

**Quabbin Regional High School
Barre, Massachusetts**

March 13 – 16, 2011

**Scott E. Knief, CHAIR
Margaret Frieswyk, ASSISTANT CHAIR
Marilyn Tencza, PRINCIPAL**

**New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.
209 Burlington Road, Suite 201, Bedford, MA 01730-1433**

TEL. 781-271-0022 / FAX 781-271-0950

www.neasc.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS	
Introduction	3
Overview of Findings	6
Teaching and Learning.....	6
Support of Teaching and Learning	8
School and Community Summary.....	10
School’s Statement of Mission and Expectations for Student Learning	13
Teaching and Learning Standards	
Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations	15
Curriculum.....	20
Instruction.....	31
Assessment of and for Student Learning	40
Support of Teaching and Learning Standards	
School Culture and Leadership.....	50
School Resources for Learning.....	59
Community Resources for Learning.....	66
Follow-Up Responsibilities.....	71
APPENDICES	
A. Roster of Visiting Committee Members	73
B. Commission Policy on Substantive Change	74

STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

Those Standards are:

Teaching and Learning Standards

- 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 Commission's

visiting committee, and the follow-up program carried out by the school to implement the findings of its own self-study and the valid recommendations of the visiting committee and those identified by the Commission in the follow-up process. Continued accreditation requires that the school be reevaluated at least once every ten years and that it show continued progress addressing identified needs.

Preparation for the Evaluation 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 Quabbin Regional High School, a committee of 8 members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people. In addition to faculty members, each self-study committee included two or three student representatives.

The self-study of Quabbin Regional High School extended over a period of 15 school months from September of 2009 to February of 2011. The visiting committee was pleased to note that several students joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

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

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Committee

A visiting committee of 13 evaluators was assigned by the commission on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate the Quabbin Regional High School. The Committee members spent four days in Barre, Massachusetts, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students, and parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school meets the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented public schools, central office administrators, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Quabbin Regional High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 42 hours shadowing 14 students for a half day
- a total of 30 hours of classroom observation
- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facility
- individual meetings with 62 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers
- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

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

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

Overview of Findings

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

Teaching and Learning at Quabbin Regional High School

The school community used a collaborative and inclusive process and research-based best practices to create a unique set of core values and beliefs. The school has identified four learning expectations that address academic, social, and civic competencies but are not delineated specifically as academic, social, and civic expectations. The students' progress on achieving the four learning expectations is measured by six rubrics that are in the early stages of implementation. While the use of school-wide rubrics is not yet evident across the school, most teachers do modify the school-wide rubrics to fit the specific needs of their assignments/assessments. The school needs to identify social and civic learning expectations and align these rubrics with its 21st century learning expectations.

Some teachers use the school-wide rubrics in their courses to assess individual student achievement of the school-wide learning expectations. Many teachers use modified versions of the school-wide rubrics for course-specific assessments; however there is no formal process in place to assess whole school and individual student progress on achieving the school's stated expectations using school-wide rubrics, and there is no formal process in place to report to students and their families each individual student's progress in achieving the school's learning expectations. The school is in the process of developing and implementing the Quabbin Regional High School Capstone Project that will allow the school to measure a graduating student's progress on achieving the school's learning expectations. Work in this area needs to continue.

A few teachers collaborate formally on the creation, analysis, and revision of summative and formative assessments including common assessments. The absence of common assessments hinders the school from ensuring that every student is assessed consistently.

The school will improve its assessment practices by developing formative and summative common assessment in all courses; implementing a formal process to ensure that school-wide rubrics are regularly used in all courses; and implementing a formal process to measure and report each student's progress on achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to student and parents.

Teachers at Quabbin Regional High School employ a wide range of instructional strategies that engage students in the learning process. They work hard to engage students as active and self-directed learners. Teachers also employ a range of summative and formative assessments to measure student progress. Students are also provided with the opportunity to work on a range of authentic tasks to build skills in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking skills. Many teachers adjust their instruction to meet the needs of each student and regularly practice differentiated instruction. Teachers now need to plan, develop, and implement cross-disciplinary lessons. Teachers need to be provided with more formal time to collaborate in order to ensure that all instructional strategies support student achievement of the 21st century learning expectations.

The curriculum provides numerous opportunities for students at Quabbin Regional High School to meet all of the 21st century learning expectations. The curriculum is currently being rewritten in a common format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills. More time devoted to professional development based on the *Understanding by Design* model will sufficiently accomplish the configuration of all existing curricula in the *Understanding by Design* format. While some of the curriculum documents include instructional practices and modified school-wide rubrics, some of the templates do not yet meet this standard.

Quabbin Regional High School lacks systematic and effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation with sending schools in the district. Within the school, there is no

established curricular coordination and articulation among academic areas, and there is currently no district-wide curriculum revision cycle to ensure that vertical curricula are aligned. No vertical articulation, common planning time, and central district coordination hinder effective curricular coordination.

Support of Teaching and Learning at Quabbin Regional High School

The administration and some staff believe the block schedule promotes student engagement, in-depth exploration of topics, and project-based learning. Other teachers and some students were concerned that the current block schedule does not meet the needs of all students or provide common planning time for staff. It is recommended that the school evaluate the current schedule to determine if it meets the needs of all students and also develop a schedule that increases common planning time for teachers.

The physical plant and environment of Quabbin Regional High School positively impacts teaching and learning. The school and grounds are well maintained, clean, and in good repair. The professionalism and the skill level of the custodial and maintenance staff benefits and enhances the school's climate and culture. The site and instructional areas are appropriate for the delivery of high quality instruction. There are sufficient teacher work spaces, classrooms, and laboratory spaces to support the academic needs of the school. The greenhouse, garden, and community supported composting facility provide students with unique hands-on learning opportunities.

Funding for school programs has been diminishing over several years. The district has tried to minimize cuts in staffing levels and course offerings while also limiting allocations for professional development, technology, instructional materials, and supplies. The technology infrastructure and capacity does not adequately meet the current needs of the school. The student population has inadequate access to computers. Teachers and administrators identify the need for increased professional development in many areas including the use of technology in the classroom. Lack of adequate funding hinders the school from providing a necessary range of services, programs, equipment, and supplies.

The school provides a wide range of support services for students. The guidance counselors, school adjustment counselors, school nurses, school psychologist, and athletic trainer work effectively together to provide all students with effective supports. The guidance department has begun to develop a formal written curriculum, and the continued development of this curriculum will ensure that student support services are consistent for all students at each grade level and consistent with the school's core values and beliefs. In general, special education services are provided through an inclusion model in which students are able to access grade-appropriate content and curriculum with structured supports. The addition of a therapeutic program has increased opportunities for students to succeed in the least restrictive environment.

The school has established a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership and pride. Working with other building leaders, the principal provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Under the principal's leadership, the school has implemented several programs that support the school's core value and beliefs about learning, including the *Understanding By Design* curriculum template, the capstone project, the advisory program, and a school-wide initiative of identifying mastery objectives. The administrators and some staff members believe the block schedule promotes student engagement, in-depth exploration of topics, and project-based learning. Other teachers and some students are concerned that the current block schedule does not meet the needs of all students or provide common planning time for the faculty. The school should evaluate the current schedule to determine if it meets the needs of all students and should develop a schedule that increases common planning time for teachers.

School and Community Summary

Quabbin Regional High School, located in Barre, Massachusetts twenty miles northwest of Worcester, opened its doors in 1967. Today the school serves students from the towns of Barre, Hardwick, Hubbardston, Oakham, New Braintree and those who come by school choice. With a renovation/addition completed in 1997 the facility contains 250,000 square feet on a 109 acre campus which includes the high school, middle school, district offices, multiple athletic fields, greenhouse, composting garden, a pond, ample parking and room for growth.

The population of Barre is 5365, Hardwick 2649, Hubbardston 4606, Oakham 1914, and New Braintree 1116. The ethnicity of the district towns is 98% white non-Hispanic, and 1% Hispanic with no other identifiable minority group. The district towns are rooted in their agricultural and textile mill past, but today's reality is that the largest employer in the Quabbin Regional School District is the school district itself. The majority of residents commute an average of 35 minutes plus, to jobs outside the district in the health care, educational services, financial services, computer services, manufacturing, or construction fields.

The median household income in Barre is \$63,482, Hardwick \$59,227, Hubbardston \$79,582, Oakham \$78,633, and New Braintree \$71,013. The Worcester County median household income is \$61,791. The percentage of the population of Barre living below the poverty level is 1.9%, Hardwick 7.5%, Hubbardston 3.7%, Oakham 1.9%, and New Braintree 4.6%. The percentage of the population living below the poverty level in Massachusetts is 15%.

The per-pupil expenditure (all funds) for the district is \$9,743 compared to a state average of \$11,858. The town of Barre contributes 49% of its budget to education, Hardwick 48%, Hubbardston 56%, Oakham 56%, and New Braintree 50%. Fifty-five point six percent of the district budget comes from state aid through Chapter 70 and 71 charter reimbursement, 3.1% from district reserves and fees, 0.1% from federal aid through reimbursement, 5.8% from school choice, and 35.3% from the five member towns.

The Quabbin Regional School District population is comprised of the following: 891 Quabbin Regional High School students in grades 9-12; 504 Quabbin Regional Middle School students in grades 7 and 8; 441 Ruggles Lane students in grades K-6; 255 Hardwick Elementary School students in grades K-6; 398 Hubbardston Center School students in grades K-6; 206 Oakham Center School students in grades 2-6; and 170 New Braintree Grade School students in grades PK, K-1. Fifty-four students from the district attend either private or parochial schools. Students from the district have the opportunity to attend (depending on residency) Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical High School, Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School, Abby Kelly Foster Charter School, North Central Charter School, or Massachusetts Academy of Math and Science along with school choice schools that surround the district.

District student population has decreased by 4% over the last four years. Twelve percent of the Quabbin Regional School District population is comprised of school choice students coming from twelve communities outside the district. The current student population at Quabbin Regional High School is the following: 223 students in grade 9; 211 students in grade 10; 232 students in grade 11; and 225 students in grade 12. There are 444 male students and 447 female students at the high school. The ethnicity of the high school population is African American 0.8%, Asian 0.6%, Hispanic 2.5%, Native American 0.2%, White 93.5%, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander 0.1%, Multi- Race, Non-Hispanic 2.3%.

The dropout rate at Quabbin Regional High School is 2.1%. The attendance rate for students is 94.4%, for teachers 96%. The number of teachers at Quabbin Regional High School is 62, making for a student teacher ratio of 14:1 and an average class size of 15:1. Quabbin Regional High School operates under a 4 by 4 block schedule. Students must pass 4 blocks of English, 5 blocks of math, 4 blocks of science, 4 blocks of social studies, 2 blocks of physical education/health, and one block in the arts for a total of 100 credits; 140 credits are needed for graduation. Fifty-nine percent of Quabbin graduates attend a 4-year college, 22% attend a 2-year college, 2% other post secondary training, 15% enter the work force, and 2% enter military service.

Educational opportunities within a 40 mile radius of Quabbin Regional High School include: Anna Maria College 17 miles, Mount Wachusett Community College 20 miles, Worcester State University 21 miles, Assumption College 23 miles, Becker College 23 miles, Quinsigamond Community College 23 miles, Clark University 24 miles, WPI 25 miles, College of the Holy Cross 29 miles, Fitchburg State University 32 miles, University of Massachusetts Amherst 36 miles , and Springfield Technical Community College 39 miles.

Quabbin Regional High School to date has established 57 partnerships with local businesses and business people spanning a wide range of possible student internship interests. A sampling of the list of partners includes: Barre Savings Bank, Chabot Farm, Hardwick Police Department, Marty & Sons Excavating, Mary Lane Hospital/Baystate Medical, Oakham Country Day, Old Sturbridge Village, Rubin, Rubin & Wilcox, and Second Chance Animal Shelter.

Quabbin Regional High School students receive recognition for their academic achievements at the end of each semester with a certificate of academic excellence and/or academic achievement. Students who are on the honor roll are notified at the end of each quarter.

National Honor Society, NJROTC, the athletic department and the music department hold independent awards nights. A breakfast is held for the Junior Book Award and for the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship recipients. Quabbin Regional High School recognizes its seniors with an awards night where local, outside and nomination scholarships are awarded. Blue and Gold Key Society cords, National Honor Society cords, cum laude, magna and summa cum laude medals, NJROTC shadow boxes, academic excellence, academic achievement, and senior athletic awards are also presented.

Quabbin Regional High School

Mission Statement

Quabbin Regional High School is a collaborative learning community, where all students have opportunities to achieve personal excellence in a safe and accepting environment.

Our mission is to prepare students to become self-reliant, lifelong learners who are responsible and resourceful citizens in a global society.

Core Values and Beliefs

1. We believe in giving all students access to a rigorous standards-based program of studies designed for a future in which they will work and learn.
2. We believe in using specific and appropriate data to inform both school and instructional decision-making.
3. We believe in using multiple measures to determine and evaluate the performance of individuals and the school.
4. We believe in giving all students access to technology-enhanced learning environments where students and teachers acquire information, interact globally, and creatively problem-solve.
5. We believe in engaging students and teachers in critical thinking, open inquiry, cooperative learning, and reflective practices both within and outside the classroom.
6. We believe in innovation to serve students and the community in a dynamically changing environment.
7. We believe in ongoing, effective, research-based professional development to enhance student achievement.
8. We believe in empowering students to take ownership of their personal development and education, to set challenging goals, and to become risk takers.
9. We value civic, social, and environmental responsibility.
10. We value collaborative approaches to teaching, learning, and decision-making among and within school, home, and community.
11. We value a strong sense of security and the existence of a safe, positive, and caring environment.
12. We value dignity, honor, and respect for all.

Learning Expectations

Students will:

- Demonstrate problem solving skills
- Be active learners
- Demonstrate good citizenship
- Be effective communicators

COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of and for Student Learning

Teaching and Learning Standard



Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

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

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

Conclusions

The Quabbin Regional School District has used research-based best practices while actively participating in a collaborative and inclusive process to create a unique set of core values and beliefs. A task force which included members of the administration and the teaching faculty was formed to re-evaluate the previous set of core values and beliefs. Students and parents were able to participate in this process and provide their input. The task force met numerous times to discuss the core values and beliefs and revised them based on research-based data. Several faculty members attended NEASC conferences and visited model schools to help draft the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations document. Through the school council which met once every other month, parents were given the opportunity to provide the administration with their input. The core values, beliefs, and learning expectations are posted on the Quabbin Regional School District's website. Teachers are able to articulate the core value, beliefs, and learning expectations in general terms although some teachers believe that the statement has too many indicators. To identify the school's core values and beliefs about learning, Quabbin Regional High School engaged in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process which was informed by current researched-based practices. (self-study, teachers, principal, parents, school board members)

The school has a list of four learning expectations that address academic, social, and civic competencies although they are not clearly identified as academic, social, and civic expectations. The expectations place an emphasis on the development of skills that can be demonstrated rather than solely on knowledge of content. Student progress on achieving the four learning expectations is measured by six rubrics that are still in the early stages of implementation. The competencies measured by the rubrics are critical thinking, effective use of technology, active learning, responsible citizenship, and written and non-written communication. The rubrics do not directly align with the stated learning expectations, but they are believed to support the expectations. For example, the school has a school-wide rubric on the use of technology but does not have a specific technology learning expectation. Also, the school has developed a critical-thinking rubric to support the school's learning expectation which states that students will "demonstrate problem-solving skills", even though the critical thinking rubric does not use the term "problem-solving". Teachers and students acknowledged

that the language of the learning expectations and the language of the rubrics do not match, but they believe this does not cause confusion for students or parents.

The students at Quabbin Regional High School are expected to take personal responsibility for their own learning and to be active learners in all classes. Good citizenship is stressed throughout the school through the promotion of opportunities to engage in community service activities and various clubs including non-profit organizations such as “Be Like Brit” and “350”. There are also school clubs such as the Gay Straight Alliance, Envirothon, JETS club, and Model UN, to name a few. The school also strongly promotes the idea that each student has a personal responsibility to the environment through its composting program, greenhouse, and community garden. The development of the Quabbin Regional High School Capstone Project, which will be fully implemented in 2014, is intended to allow students to better demonstrate their mastery and understanding of the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning skills. In the responses to the Endicott Survey, parents and students feel that the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school where students encounter an overall positive learning experience. Both groups feel that Quabbin Regional High School is a safe place in which everyone is respected and acknowledged. The majority of parents and students is familiar with the school’s core values and beliefs, and a large majority of responding parents (90.3%) feels that they know and understand the level of learning their student must demonstrate to meet the school’s learning expectations. The Endicott Survey indicated that 46.3% of students and 47% of parents feel that the set of 21st century learning skills are challenging. The survey also indicated that 62.7% of students is familiar with the school’s rubrics. Thus, the school has established a strong supportive positive climate for learning based on principles in the core beliefs and expectations. (Endicott Survey, teachers, students, parents)

The administrators and faculty members look at specific data such as the results of SAT exams and MCAS tests, advanced placement scores, and the graduation percentage, to guide their decisions. Administrators intend to provide the faculty with the necessary professional development in rubrics form and use. Both administrators and teachers take the school’s 21st century learning skills and expectations into consideration when they are designing the curriculum and individual lesson plans. They try to create a positive environment within the

school that undoubtedly enhances the students' learning experiences, ultimately enabling them to actively participate in the learning process. In some areas, there are insufficient technological resources that should be the focus of school resource allocation, and this is being addressed by the administration. The school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school; these values, beliefs, and expectations are beginning to influence curriculum, instruction, and assessment in classrooms. These 21st century learning expectations are also beginning to guide the school's policies, procedures, and decisions. (self-study, Endicott Survey, administrators, parents, students, facilities tour)

The school formally reviews its core values, beliefs, and 21st learning expectations annually. When the school accreditation has been completed, the school will form a committee to revisit the core values and beliefs and address areas of need. The faculty has voiced concern that there are too many core values and beliefs and expresses a need for greater brevity, and there are some concerns about the wording of the rubrics. Recently, when the new superintendent was hired, the faculty and staff members were asked to re-evaluate the original core values and beliefs that had been developed. They used several pieces of research including a review and analysis of the results of the MCAS, SAT, and final exams and the school's drop-out rate percentage to identify students' areas of need and modify curriculum and instruction in order to better meet those student needs. Some parents have been involved in the revision of the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations through school council, and the faculty is given the opportunity to provide regular feedback to the administration. Annual formal review and revision of the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations is important so that faculty members and administrators can adequately meet the evolving needs of their students. (self-study, administrators, core values and beliefs subcommittee, parents)

Commendations

1. The school's strong emphasis on and commitment to civic and environmental responsibilities
2. The school's strong, supportive, positive climate based on the core beliefs and expectations

3. Administrators and teachers taking the school's 21st century learning skills and expectations into consideration to design the curriculum and individual lesson plans
4. Continuing teacher assessment of the effectiveness of the wording of the expectations and the rubrics

Recommendations

1. Align the wording of the school-wide analytic rubrics with the school's 21st century learning expectations
2. Clearly identify social and civic learning expectations
3. Establish a timeline for a formal review of the core values and expectations using research, data sources, and district and community priorities
4. Provide professional development for the effective use of analytic rubrics in all classes

Teaching and Learning Standard



Curriculum

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

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

Conclusions

The curriculum provides numerous opportunities for students at Quabbin Regional High School to meet all of the 21st century learning expectations. The faculty and staff members have identified four 21st century learning expectations in 2008 and are in the process of rewriting their curriculum using a universal template to identify how the curriculum supports student achievement of these expectations. School-wide rubrics have been developed based on these learning expectations, but rubrics implementation is not complete, and the school-wide rubrics are not included as suggested assessments in the curriculum documents. The Quabbin Regional High School Academic and Co-Curricular Planning Guide lists the school's core values and beliefs as well as the 21st century learning expectations; however, the guide does not make clear connections between course content and the identified learning expectations. The school's faculty has prepared *Understanding by Design* templates that identify by unit which 21st century learning expectations are addressed in each course offered. Courses in art, math, music, science, social studies, world languages, and other areas provide students with the opportunity to practice problem-solving skills which is one of the school's expectations. Some art, business, social studies, English, world language, science, and math courses provide students with the opportunity to practice being active and authentic learners, another expectation. Likewise, some math, social studies, world language, and science courses provide students with the opportunity to practice good citizenship, another expectation. Quabbin Regional High School requires students in the current graduating class to satisfactorily complete 140 credits in a minimum of 28 courses. Quabbin Regional High School has had ongoing discussions about how to ensure that the students of the class of 2014 will demonstrate all 21st century learning expectations by their junior year before they move on to begin their capstone project. In addition to five courses in mathematics, students must include four courses each in English, science, and social studies. The capstone project will be the culminating achievement in the high school experience, providing an interdisciplinary, intellectually challenging program designed to engage students in developing ideas and building arguments through open inquiry and investigation and will require informed and ethical use of technology. In addition, the project will expose students to a wide range of resources accessible in communities beyond the school and will provide students with opportunities to work with recognized outside experts.

The capstone project will be standards-based, connected to all aspects of the student's community, and will employ multiple measures of assessment. This project will ensure that all students master each of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Although the full curriculum at Quabbin Regional High School provides opportunities for each student to practice and achieve the school's learning expectations, the present curriculum does not include implementation of the learning expectations in the purposeful design of the curriculum, and while some of the curriculum documents include instructional practices and modified school-wide rubrics, some of the documents do not. (Quabbin Regional High School Co-Curriculum Planning Guide, teachers, presentations, Endicott Survey, self-study)

The curriculum is currently being rewritten in a common format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills. A review of the Quabbin Regional High School Academic and Co-Curricular Planning Guide illustrates that, while the mission statement, core values, beliefs, and learning expectations are listed as part of the booklet, the learning expectations are not directly related to the course content. Concepts, content, and skills are frequently integrated in the course descriptions. The use of the *Understanding by Design* template includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills as well as the school's 21st century learning expectations. There has not been adequate time devoted to professional development based on the *Understanding by Design* template to reconfigure all existing curricula to the *Understanding by Design* format. During the 2009-2010 academic year, each department established key concepts for mastery and exposure in each subject and at each level across the department's curriculum. Following this process, each department established specific course expectations based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for each subject and each level across the department's curriculum. Based on the *Understanding by Design* approach to curriculum planning, each department developed templates for each subject, level, and unit of study, including the following elements: established state framework goals, understandings, essential questions, statements of what students will know, statements of what students will be able to do, and 21st century learning expectations (including school-wide rubrics). However, this format did not include either suggested instructional or assessment strategies with the school-wide rubrics as part of these so they must be added to complete the format. The alignment of curricula using the *Understanding by Design* model is not yet

complete; therefore, all aspects of the new design may not be part of the current professional practice. The work has begun, however, and the format will make curriculum revision and alignment easier and more effective. (teachers, student work, self-study)

The curriculum at Quabbin Regional High School provides opportunities for students to emphasize depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem-solving, higher-order thinking, authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school, and informed and ethical use of technology. Inquiry-based learning is an important part of some classes and is one of the school's core values and beliefs. This emphasis on inquiry is shown in the essential questions in the *Understanding by Design* models of curriculum used by all teachers. Teachers regularly incorporate inquiry into many lessons, not just science classes in areas of lab design and lab techniques. Teachers often require students to use observations to draw conclusions. According to the Endicott Survey, most faculty members, parents, and students, agree or strongly agree that the curriculum challenges students to think critically, problem-solve, and utilize higher-order thinking. Problem-solving is one of the school's 21st century learning expectations. This expectation is demonstrated in math, technology, robotics, chemistry, and physics classes. These classes routinely apply problem-solving techniques by gathering data, observing, and collecting evidence to solve problems. Many of the classes at Quabbin Regional High School require higher-order thinking: in global perspectives and history classes, students evaluate and defend public policy and historical decisions; in biology and chemistry classes, students debate ethical topics such as stem cell research and the use of nuclear energy; in English classes, students write, revise, and edit analytical papers using peer editing; in robotics classes, students design a robot to perform a specific task; in art classes, students design, create, and evaluate the work they produce; in AP US History Classes, students evaluate written documents, political cartoons, visual art, and graphic data to draw conclusions about historical issues and the political climate of the time. (student shadowing, curriculum guide, teachers)

Authentic learning opportunities are available in many forms both in and out of school. Examples of authentic learning opportunities in school include experiences in music, art, theater, robotics, journalism, world language, media, and the Navy Junior Reserve Officers

Training Corps (NJROTC). Students in biology classes participate in authentic learning through biotech labs using the *BioTeach* lab bus from Boston University Medical School.

Environmental science students measure water quality in the area and have written a pamphlet available to the public. Student clubs and program such as Women in Technology, HOSA, Math Team, Envirothon, JETS club, and Model UN provide students with opportunities for authentic learning and opportunities to practice social and civic expectations. The planned capstone project will be an example of an authentic learning experience for students in the future. The Quabbin Regional High School internship program provides out-of-school opportunities for authentic learning; typically, 20-30 students per semester are given internships in a wide range of fields including medicine, finance, education, construction, and mechanics. Students may also take a wide variety of classes through the Virtual High School Program. Students demonstrate informed and ethical use of technology in class using computers, *SMARTBoards*, and technological instruments in their daily activities. The school has also created a writing guide which details how students are to credit Internet sources. Most teachers in the school follow the MLA Style Manual and require students to annotate, present, or discuss sources to minimize plagiarism and ensure academic rigor. (student shadowing, students, teachers)

The curriculum at Quabbin Regional High School provides opportunities for students to emphasize depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem-solving, higher-order thinking, authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school, and informed and ethical use of technology. However, there is very little application of knowledge through cross-disciplinary learning, and curriculum documents do not illustrate connections made from one content area to another. There are no interdisciplinary courses currently being taught. During the academic year 2007-2008, teachers created interdisciplinary projects that have not been fully implemented. Groups of teachers from different disciplines created lessons around central topics of their choice. Teachers from music and art developed a unit linking jazz and fine arts to American history, but scheduling issues and lack of common planning time are said to prevent the school from implementing these inter-disciplinary units. (Co-Curriculum Planning Guide, teachers, presentations, Endicott Survey, self-study)

Quabbin Regional High School is working toward aligning the written and taught curriculum. The Endicott Survey indicates that 65% of the staff members agree, “The written and taught curricula are aligned.” Most teachers submit *Understanding by Design* templates to chief instructional leaders and administrators for review, but not all curricula from all courses have been reviewed. Across the school, teachers clearly post mastery objectives and essential questions in each classroom. Administrators and chief instructional leaders ensure that teachers have adopted these procedures and that teachers state and/or refer to the learning objectives and essential questions in their instruction during the evaluation process. A 2010 Quabbin Regional High School survey of teachers indicated that many of the school’s departments use a common final exam for all sections of a class and that many teachers collaborate on lesson plans, projects, labs, activities, and assessments of the same class. Some chief instructional leaders have put in place a mechanism for teachers to share and provide feedback on teachers’ submitted lesson plans. Multiple sections of a class within a department share one set of *Understanding by Design* unit plans. The Endicott Survey reported that 27.6% of staff members responded that they “have sufficient time to be engaged in formal curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work.” The survey indicated that while there is no formal allocation of time for collaboration, many teachers collaborate regularly on their own time. Many departments also allocate time for MCAS item analysis and adjust the curriculum according to strengths and weaknesses revealed by that data. Teachers’ informal collaboration and departmental MCAS review provide some opportunity to ensure that there is a clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum. (teachers, self-study, chief instructional leaders, Endicott Survey)

Quabbin Regional High School has not established systematic and effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation with sending schools in the district. Within the school, there is some curricular coordination and articulation among the academic areas. The Quabbin Regional High School curriculum review takes place during the preparation of the annual academic and co-curricular planning guide. The 2010-2011 edition of the guide introduced significant changes to the graduation requirements for the graduating class of 2014, featuring a new, required, 5-credit senior capstone project course and a total of 10 credits in a world language course. A committee consisting of members of the administration, guidance

department, and chief instructional leaders handles the annual preparation of the guide. Although chief instructional leaders have curriculum review responsibility, there is no formal development, review, and evaluation process other than conversation during the annual preparation of the academic and co-curricular planning guide although there have been some regular meetings of chief instructional leaders to try to move toward ensuring seamless articulation within and among content areas, but the school has not held any meetings with chief instructional leaders or teachers from sending schools to discuss vertical articulation of the curriculum. A separate committee has begun but has not completed work on the capstone project and its implementation. Members of the faculty do not spend time in collaborative activities designed to align curriculum documentation or delivery. The school does not provide regular K-12 professional learning communities, critical friends groups, or common planning time although there have been periodic efforts to have teachers meet to focus on a specific professional development topic such as career pathways and freshman academy. During the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 academic years, the former district director of educational services gave direction to the articulation of the curriculum in English language arts K-6 and mathematics K-12. Although the *Understanding by Design* template is designed to ensure the horizontal articulation within each department, there has been no recent effective curriculum coordination or planning between the middle and high school. Effective curricular coordination is hindered by the absence of vertical articulation, common planning time, and district curriculum coordination. (Co-Curriculum Planning Guide, teachers, presentations, Endicott Survey, self-study)

Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to implement the curriculum, including co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities. However, the Endicott Survey reports that 40.8% of staff members believe that there is insufficient professional staff to implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities. The average class size is 15.4 students with as many as 30, or as few as 3, enrolled in selected classes. Most classes observed were between 20-25 students. In some art, world language, media, music, and study-skills classes, enrollment is low per level; however, such classes include several levels of students in the same period. The self-study indicates that some scheduling results in teachers

having several class preparations for one period, and the self-study reports that attrition through retirement and layoffs has resulted in larger class sizes, primarily in the English, math, science, and social studies departments. In the science department, lab class sizes exceeding 24 students present a safety concern.

Over the past three years, Quabbin Regional High School has decreased the amount of money spent on school supplies, curriculum materials, and technology as a result of budget cutbacks and lack of state funding although teachers comment that requests for school supplies and curriculum materials are often met by the administration. Teachers also note that there has been very little funding of textbook replacement or new textbook purchases, and this situation is creating book shortages and a decrease in curriculum choices. Although students have textbooks, some may be outdated, and there is no current textbook replacement cycle. (self-study, administrators, teachers, students)

The district's technology director and staff members continue to make upgrades to the school's technology and equipment in the classrooms, offices, and media center. Over the past three years, purchases include computer laptop carts for classroom use, a series of permanently installed *SMART* and *ENO* boards, *Nova Net*-specific computers (for a credit recovery program), OBI systems, new or upgraded computers and/or monitors for the media center and most classrooms, and a new classroom set of computers for the web-design lab. Some teachers report that scheduling time in the computer laboratories or using one of the mobile laptop computer carts is difficult as Quabbin Regional High School shares its media center, computer laboratories, and mobile laptop carts with the adjacent middle school. Teachers have reported that the maximum number of computers in each facility does not meet the needs of larger classes, resulting in students doubling-up on computers or the need to split classes into two different laboratories. When a class is split, the teacher must be available in both computer laboratories at the same time. Teachers and students have also reported frustration with the number of computers in working order at any given time in any one of the computer laboratories, often resulting in not having enough working computers for a large class. The Endicott Survey indicates that 52.2% of parents believes that the school's technology resources are adequate. The self-study indicates that despite increased technology in the building, such as

the recent upgrade of wiring to support new technology and the purchase of additional *SMART* and *ENO* boards for classrooms, many teachers do not have classroom computers with sufficient memory or processors. Although the Endicott Survey found that 81.3% of parents thinks the school facility (classrooms, computer labs, science labs, media center, gymnasium) is adequate to support teaching and learning, teachers and administrators report that the technology infrastructure is not sufficient, resulting in computer server issues and Internet disruptions. This hinders the delivery of the curriculum and the integration of technology into the classroom. Teachers and students state that the district's computer Internet firewall system, *Sonic Wall*, often blocks too much access by teachers and students, resulting in diminished or limited search results. The Endicott Survey indicates that 35.5% of co-curricular programs are believed to be adequately funded. There are some teacher-led teacher-driven programs. Staffing levels, instructional materials, and informal unstructured co-curricular opportunities are sufficient to support the curriculum; however, current technology is not sufficient to support the curriculum. (student work, teachers, chief instructional leaders)

Quabbin Regional High School has taken steps toward providing the professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum using assessment results and current research. The district has added a director of curriculum, but the position has split responsibilities with another school district. The director of curriculum has the responsibility to oversee district-wide curriculum and works with principals and building leaders to establish professional development and curricular goals, priorities, and initiatives. While the benefits of having a district-wide curriculum coordinator are valuable, the shared director's time is limited in the Quabbin Regional School District. There is no district-wide curriculum committee. The recent loss of the high school's dean of academics with responsibility for curriculum development and revision within the high school has degraded that school's curricular function capability. *Understanding by Design* training and implementation has begun but needs to be completed, especially in the assessment and training stages for all teachers. Chief instructional leaders have replaced department heads. The name change reflects their new responsibilities to work directly with teachers and support staff on curriculum coordination and articulation. The chief instructional leaders also ensure that staff members receive and use professional development

to enhance instructional practice. In addition to the administrative structural changes, Quabbin Regional School District schedules department meetings once a month and chief instructional leaders' meetings twice a month. However, the Endicott Survey reveals that 56.6% of staff members believes that there is not sufficient time to engage in formal curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work. Common planning time within and between departments would give teachers additional opportunities for curriculum coordination, including cross-disciplinary planning, assessment, and development. There is no formal curriculum review cycle implemented, nor is there curriculum alignment between the high school and the middle school. (Endicott Survey, teachers, administrators)

While it is a positive sign of commitment that the school district includes a course reimbursement component in the teachers' contract, the district has reduced the amount of reimbursement by half; however, the district provides funds for general professional development. Research-based programs offered to many members of the teaching staff include: *Understanding by Design* instruction which will enable the faculty to link the school-wide learning expectations with the rubrics and curriculum Teachers have also been offered advanced placement teacher training, career pathways development, classroom walkthroughs, virtual high school training, and performance improvement mapping. The district has trained the chief instructional leaders in supervision and evaluation, common assessment, and the *Understanding by Design* model. Although the faculty does evaluate data collected from MCAS and common assessments, data have not been collected from assessment of the school's learning expectations or use of the school-wide rubrics that could inform curriculum revision. The Quabbin Regional School District and Quabbin Regional High School have begun to provide the personnel, time, and resources for curriculum development, evaluation, and revision, but it is necessary to provide more complete assessment results to ensure effective curriculum improvements. (teachers, self-study, administrators, student work)

Commendations

1. The design and adoption of the capstone project for all students beginning with the class of 2014
2. The adoption of the *Understanding by Design* curriculum template to provide curricular coordination and assessment
3. The provision of professional development in *Understanding by Design* so that all teachers may align curricular documents
4. The wide range of opportunities for students to practice and achieve the school's learning expectations.

Recommendations

1. Revise curriculum documents using the *Understanding by Design* format to include course content and learning expectations and suggested instructional and assessment strategies, including the use of the school-wide rubrics
2. Create professional learning opportunities in order for teachers to collaborate around curriculum development and revision
3. Increase interdisciplinary learning opportunities for all students
4. Create district-wide curriculum teams for the purpose of vertical articulation with sending schools
5. Increase professional development opportunities centered on curriculum development
6. Provide increased administrative support for the development, review, and implementation of curriculum by appointing a district-wide curriculum director
7. Develop and implement a formal curriculum revision cycle
8. Provide sufficient teaching materials such as textbooks to deliver the curriculum effectively

Teaching and Learning Standard



Instruction

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.

Conclusions

At Quabbin Regional High School teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations through the evaluation system and walk-through process. The core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations were updated in 2009, and since that time, teachers have been engaged in implementing the core values and expectations within their individual classes. Some teachers align their instruction with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. In Spanish and English classes the assignments have been aligned with the school's core values and 21st century learning expectations, but there is no on-going process of examining instruction outside of the evaluation process. Because there is no formal system of ongoing collegial discussion with the expectation that teachers should be actively reflective about their practices and a protocol for looking at student work and regular meeting times for all teachers across departments, teachers are isolated in their attempts to improve or to align instruction and assignments with the updated core values. Outside of the evaluation process and the walk-throughs, there is no process to ensure the consistency of instructional practices with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, teachers, classroom observations, student work)

Instructional practices support the 21st century learning expectations in informal ways. Although the Endicott Survey reveals a large difference between how teachers view their attempts to personalize instruction (75% agrees) contrasted with how students view teacher efforts to personalize instruction (25% agrees), many teachers try to personalize instruction for students. Teachers use group learning activities, personalized assignments, and additional support to personalize all student learning experiences. For example, teachers in mixed ability English classes prepare lessons for several novels based on students' demonstrated reading comprehension levels and teach them concurrently. In French classes, a variety of methods is used within the classroom instructional time to engage learners such as cooperative group learning, direct instruction, and kinesthetic learning (acting out scenes). In US history classes, students prepare, research, and present their research projects and choose their topics. Many teachers design assignments so that the students choose their own topic, increasing the student's interest in the assignment. In English classes, students are given a choice of project format to

present their interpretation of a character from a novel, including acting out the part, writing a song, or creating a portrait. In health, students are given choices of topics on which to write a report. Students are also given opportunities to personalize their learning by completing projects in health classes through the writing and design of music if that is their forte. In the global perspectives classes, students have opportunities to pick a topic of interest they will research and present; likewise, the digital art classes allow students to make personal connections between themselves within the framework of surrealism or a preferred genre. Through the new advisory program which was implemented fully in September 2010, students have an opportunity twice a month to discuss their learning needs and academic progress with their teacher/advisors. Until all teachers have completed the *Understanding by Design* training, they will not be able to implement the use of essential questions effectively in their instructional practices. (Endicott Survey, student shadowing, students, teachers)

Teachers do not have the common planning time necessary to develop and implement cross-disciplinary lessons even though they try to do this informally. Teachers have prepared a cross-disciplinary program when teachers from music and art developed a unit linking jazz and fine arts to American history, but they have not been implemented. However, teachers in US History II and chemistry classes are teaching the 21st century learning skills through a shared presentation. These skills include research, problem-solving, and the oral presentation/communication of information. Teachers report that they use some professional development time to develop interdisciplinary units in art, English, and history. The US History II teachers created cross-disciplinary plans to address standards and school expectations in history and English, but the plan has not been implemented in either history or English classes. Thus, although teachers recognize the value of such combination of subject matter and skills, there is no formal cross-disciplinary learning and no school-sponsored process to facilitate such learning. (teachers, administrators, self-study, student shadowing)

Quabbin Regional High School teachers engage students as active and self-directed learners. The Endicott Survey reveals that 76.6% of students believes that they are given ample opportunities to engage in group activities within the classroom and to select work they can do

as projects. In geometry, students teach one another inductive and deductive reasoning. Students work cooperatively in groups in French and teach one another how to order and reject food at a restaurant. US history classes demonstrate active and self-directed learning in the preparation, research, and presentation of their research projects as well as the opportunity for students to choose their topics. Algebra II assignments integrate graphic design into a real-life project where the teacher facilitates the creation and mathematical computation of the design. Finally, world language teachers also engage students in active learning through the presentation of research projects about selling and buying a home. (student shadowing, Endicott Survey, students, teachers)

Many students have some opportunities to work on authentic tasks to build their skills in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking skills. However, many student work examples reveal that students do not consistently practice higher-order thinking skills. Students in advanced placement and upper level classes in world languages, English, and history work on research projects which include extensive opportunities to conduct authentic research and present their findings in front of their peers (practicing their communication skills that are school expectations). Students in science classes have the opportunity to conduct authentic environmental experiments using the school's rich site-based offerings, the pond, the alternative energy trailer, the greenhouse, and composting system. Students in mathematics and English classes engage in self-reflection on their homework and long-term assignments and are given opportunities to provide peer feedback and peer editing. This is a formal use of self-assessment and reflection that should also be built into all other subjects as part of the school-wide student assessment and must be a school-supported practice. The school provides technology classes in real world skills for the marketplace such as Web-design and Media I and II, but the number of these offerings have declined in the last few years as a result of staff reductions and attrition, and they require up-to-date technology equipment. Technology is implemented in the classroom and is used by some students, but it is a tool mostly implemented by teachers. The requirements for fulfilling the school's 21st century expectations do not include a formal technology component. Students in math and science classes use *SMARTBoards* for solving equations. World language teachers and students use technology in Chinese classes to hand-draw characters. There is a concern that the school's teaching and learning practices will fall

behind because there is a reluctance to spend money on technology until both infrastructure and teacher professional development concerns are concurrently addressed. When instructional practices are specifically aligned to the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations and supported by appropriate and regularly updated technologies, higher-order thinking skills and learning achievement will be universal. (teachers, Endicott Survey, school committee members, student work, parents, classroom observations)

Many, but not all teachers, adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by the use of formative assessments during class. Formative assessments include white board activities, *SMARTBoard* practices, exit tickets, "do now" class opening assignments, surveys, listening activities, group work, and classroom discussions. Students realize that the formative assessments do not produce a formal grade but rather are a vital part of the learning process. Many teachers administer pre-tests, which they use to adjust and inform their instruction. Most teachers reported that students have the opportunity to prepare a rough draft of their essay for the teachers' review and comment. Based on teacher feedback and peer editing, students then rewrite the essay for a final grade. Before students present their work for final consideration, many opportunities for improvement are incorporated into the teachers' typical classroom routines. (teachers, administrators, self-study)

Teachers regularly practice elements of differentiated instruction. The district has contracted W.B. Ribas and Associates, a department of education recognized consulting company, to offer *Instructional Practices that Maximize Student Achievement For Teachers By Teachers*. This course is free of charge to all high school teachers and is offered every summer for professional development. The course is also available to teachers on-line throughout the school year. In world language classes, vocabulary is presented through multiple modalities. When differentiated instruction is implemented through a structured process, all students are given an opportunity to reach their full potential. (teachers, Endicott Survey, internal staff surveys, student work, parents)

According to the Endicott Survey, 69.7% of teachers and 76.6% of students report using organized group work in their classrooms. At times, students have the opportunity to choose

their own partners, and at other times, they are strategically placed together by teachers. Specific tasks are assigned to individual group members to promote collaboration among students and to distribute responsibility equally to all students in the group. (Endicott Survey, students, student shadowing)

All teachers, per contract, offer at least two hours of after school time each week to provide one-on-one attention to students. Students report that this is very helpful to them in meeting their educational goals. Course expectation sheets outline teachers' availability for parents and students, and there is an open house once a semester, which provides an opportunity for teachers to discuss students' strengths and needs with parents. Special education staff members are provided in classrooms that have five to six students requiring special education services. This support assists teachers in following suggestions for modifications for the special education students. All teachers are notified in writing of any students in their classroom with a 504 plan. Additionally, teachers occasionally hold individual conferences with these students about their progress. Many teachers use differentiation strategies within the class to help students learn better, and they permit students to re-take quizzes and/or tests after the teacher re-teaches the information to the students. Some teachers allow students to complete test corrections. The student will identify the mistakes made on the test and explain in writing what their mistakes were and what is needed to answer the questions correctly. Teachers indicate that they often break large tasks such as projects or long assignments into smaller steps in order to check on student progress along the way. Teachers also report that they frequently allow more time for students to complete assignments when needed. (teacher contract, administrators, self-study, student shadowing)

Some teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by using data from a variety of summative and formative assessments, examining student work within departments, and engaging in informal professional discourse about instructional practices. Instructors in chemistry, Algebra II, and calculus use formative feedback during the instructional period to check for understanding of concepts completed through homework assignments. Teachers review homework and instruct students to come to the board and use *SMARTBoard* technologies in order to teach other students homework concepts and to check on

student understanding of the concepts they have taught. French language teachers use a variety of game activities to check for student understanding, and re-teach vocabulary assignments in other ways where necessary. Student work shows that teachers provide feedback and allow students to revise work to better meet course and school-wide learning expectations. Teachers in mathematics, science, art, and world languages give extra chances for students to review and revise their work for an increased grade, thereby checking on their own teaching effectiveness. There is no formal process or common protocol for examining student work. Members of the mathematics department alter instruction in response to identified areas of needs on the MCAS exam. Advanced placement (AP) teachers use AP scores to redesign instruction in order to improve future performance. The Endicott Survey indicates that 77.6% of the staff believes that teachers examine student work to improve their instructional practices. The Endicott Survey also indicates that 48% of the faculty has opportunities to engage in professional discourse; in fact, teachers are engaged in professional discourse about instruction only informally. The school provides very few opportunities, outside of formal professional development sessions, for teachers to engage in professional discourse. Such opportunities, because they are not formally structured and not universally available, are not an integral part of the improvement of professional practice. (teacher interviews, student shadowing, Endicott Survey, self-study, student work)

Teachers maintain their expertise in their content area and are reflective practitioners. In fiscal year 2010, twenty-six faculty members completed courses outside of the district including content-specific courses. They also completed pedagogical courses such as “Reading Strategies in Content Areas” and “Advanced Placement Chemistry”. However, the majority of these courses were content-specific and therefore not directed at general instructional strategies. The administration encourages faculty members to participate in additional professional development outside of the district. This is encouraged at the district level as well by partially reimbursing teachers for the expenses incurred from the courses. However, there is no formal process in place for teachers to share their experiences with the faculty. Teachers report regularly reading professional journals and content-specific literature to design or implement teaching strategies specific to their subject matter. Departments meet monthly to discuss issues relevant to the department and to review and analyze state test results. Each department has

developed yearly goals. While teachers view this time as valuable, many teachers have expressed concern regarding the lack of common planning time with colleagues to collaborate and share best instructional practices. Teachers must collaborate with each other informally and share teaching materials and best practices when they can find the time. The teacher evaluation system allows teachers with professional status to engage in an alternative evaluation option on the years they are not being directly observed. They must decide between the methods of alternative evaluation that include peer walk-throughs, peer coaching, or assembling artifacts into a portfolio. Teachers report their progress to the administration at mid-year and the end of the year. When professional development, review of current research and best practices can be focused on content-specific pedagogy, and when time for collaboration and reflection is consistently provided, student learning will be improved. (teachers, school publications, chief instructional leaders)

Commendations

1. Teachers' use of a wide variety of teaching strategies
2. The teachers' commitment to support all students
3. The varied and interesting ways teachers encourage students to be creative in pursuing their own interests and in real life examples of student work
4. The emphasis on inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking to support student achievement of the school's learning expectations.
5. The range of instructional strategies used in all subject areas that engage students as self-directed learners.
6. The examination of student work and the use of data to improve instruction.

Recommendations

1. Establish a consistent formal process for all teachers to examine the alignment of instruction with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations
2. Provide teachers with regular and formal time to collaborate around instructional topics

3. Increase professional development opportunities in content-specific pedagogy
4. Complete the *Understanding by Design* training for all teachers and establish regular updates for new faculty members
5. Develop and implement a process with a recognized protocol and designated time to regularly examine student work and discuss best practices

Teaching and Learning Standard



Assessment of and for Student Learning

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

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

Conclusions

Some teachers use the school-wide rubrics in their courses to assess individual student achievement of the school-wide 21st century learning expectations; however, the school has no formal process in place to assess whole-school and/or individual student progress in achieving these learning expectations. The chief instructional leaders have surveyed their departments informally, asking teachers which learning expectations most closely align with their curriculum content to guide teachers in focusing on specific rubrics to use within their particular courses. However, the school has provided little or no professional development in incorporating these rubrics within particular content areas. This professional development is necessary to ensure that all teachers are able to be comfortable and consistent in their use of the rubrics and can encourage students to use the rubrics as a continuous formative self-assessment tool.

While the use of school-wide rubrics has not been well established and does not obviously affect all assessment across the school as it is intended to do, most teachers currently modify the school-wide rubrics to fit the specific needs of their assignments and assessments. However, the terminology used in the modified rubrics matches that used in the school-wide rubrics and not the language of the expectations. The level of achievement the school expects students to attain is clearly labeled as “proficient”, and students are expected to consistently demonstrate the skills described in the learning expectations. The rubrics categories are designated “advanced”, “proficient”, “needs improvement”, and “warning/failing”. Even the modified rubrics used to assess students allow some consistency in grading among many different disciplines, but the school-wide rubrics have yet to be integrated throughout the entire school.

The level of achievement the school expects students to attain is clearly labeled as “proficient”, and students are expected to consistently demonstrate the skills described in the learning expectations. The school-wide rubrics have yet to be widely integrated, however, and teachers acknowledge that the initiative to fully adopt the expectations into active class use and implement the school-wide rubrics is still an ongoing process. There should be a timeline for implementation, and this process should be formalized as it is important to maintain consistency through the use of school-wide expectations and rubrics to effectively measure

students' progress on achieving the school's stated 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, school-wide rubrics, teachers, administrators)

A capstone task force has been created to help design the senior capstone project which will assess student achievement of all the school's 21st century learning expectations. This project will be a graduation requirement for the class of 2014. However, the school has not ensured that each student currently has a regular opportunity to have their progress measured toward attaining the school's learning expectations through the four high school years. The implementation of a formal process to employ the use of the school-wide rubrics consistently in all courses would ensure that every student, no matter the course, level, or teacher, would be regularly assessed on their progress in achieving the school's learning expectations and would know where to focus extra effort to succeed. The faculty could also use these assessments to measure whole school achievement of the school's learning expectations. (teachers, chief instructional leaders, students, Endicott Survey, self-study)

Quabbin Regional High School faculty members do not have a school-wide process to communicate to the students, families, nor the community, the progress each student is making in meeting the 21st century learning expectations as the student progresses through high school. Moreover, the school has not formally identified benchmark dates or times throughout the school year when it will communicate in writing to all students and their families regarding individual achievement of these learning expectations. Similarly, the school has not identified benchmark dates or times when it will share whole-school achievement of each of the school's 21st century learning expectations with the exception of 2012, when the class of 2014 will be at the mid-way point of the capstone project due for full implementation in 2014. By effectively communicating individual and whole-school progress toward achievement of each of the school's 21st century learning expectations to students, parents, and the larger school community, the school can ensure that students and members of the learning community understand the rubrics assessment process and can provide instruction and support structures and adjust them to meet all students' needs and aid in student achievement of the 21st century learning expectations. (teachers, parents, chief instructional leaders, Endicott Survey)

The professional staff does not frequently and formally collect, disaggregate, and analyze data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. The teachers analyze MCAS results and final exams, but they do not formally analyze formative assessments throughout the school year. Moreover, teachers do not consistently review student work that has been assessed using the school-wide analytic rubrics. Teachers do not have a common planning time within the school day to have formal, lengthy discussions. Teachers occasionally discuss achievement inequities found through MCAS scores but do not regularly take formal steps to resolve these inequities for the students who show them. There are no on-going discussions of achievement gaps. Some teachers occasionally use data and results to inform changes in the curriculum and instructional practices. Collecting, disaggregating, and analyzing data to identify and respond to gaps in student achievement will inform instructional strategies and curriculum changes to meet the needs of all students. (administrators, teachers, Endicott Survey)

Prior to each unit of study, some teachers communicate the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations, but teachers frequently communicate unit-specific learning goals to be assessed. Currently, mastery objectives are posted in the majority of classrooms, verbally reviewed, and/or placed at the top of students' notes and/or assignments. According to the Endicott Survey, 63.9% of the students agree that teachers explain learning expectations before each unit of study. Effectively communicating the 21st century learning expectations prior to each unit of study helps inform instruction and guides student understanding and learning. (students, classroom observations, Endicott Survey)

Prior to summative assessments, some teachers and departments frequently provide students with the corresponding rubrics. Students are given rubrics in particular courses, but the school-wide rubrics are often modified to more course-specific rubrics. Students are rarely formally required to complete a self-assessment prior to submitting projects. In the Endicott Survey, 67.1% of students reports that their teachers use rubrics to assess their work and 73.3% of students states that they understand in advance what work they have to accomplish to meet the teachers' expectations. Providing students with rubrics prior to summative assessments informs students of what is expected of them and guides their completion of the work or product. (Endicott Survey, students, teachers, student work, classroom observations)

Many teachers regularly communicate to their classes the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals. Teachers regularly post agendas and class goals on their boards and inform students of what they are expected to know and be able to do. Sample teacher units showcase many of the following formative assessments: the use of clickers and mini white boards, question of the day, warm-ups and closers, quizzes, tests, portfolios, journals, projects, performances, homework questions, verbal dip-sticking, question and answer sessions, PowerPoint presentations, essays, and teacher observations. Many teachers allow students to retest or rewrite assignments; however, there is currently no school-wide policy concerning retesting or rewriting. There is a concerted effort by administrators and faculty members to acquire and examine data gleaned from final examinations in order to use that data to inform decisions about curriculum and instruction. This use of data collected from final exams could be enriched by data collected from common formative and summative assessments whose results are shared by faculty members teaching the same course. The school's lack of common assessments will hinder its goal of achieving the core beliefs and values and the school's 21st century learning expectations. (student work, teachers, Endicott Survey)

Only a few teachers collaborate regularly and formally on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative assessments including common assessments. All courses are required to have a final exam. While the high school has established a formal meeting schedule including staff meetings, department meetings, chief instructional leaders' meetings, and professional development days, there is no formal system that ensures teachers have time to collaborate with each other, especially in the area of creating common assessments and examining the results of assessments. Currently common assessments are given and analyzed only during final examinations. Teachers perform an item analysis of MCAS data which drives changes in the curriculum and common assessments, and additional assessment data is gained through informal discussions. The administration and faculty seem ready to embrace the idea of creating common assessments, but lack of common meeting time is a major roadblock hindering progress toward achieving the school's goals in the assessment of student learning. According to the Endicott Survey, only 23.7% of teachers believe they collaborate regularly in formal ways

on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments. The lack of common collaborative time and the absence of common assessments prevent the school from ensuring that every student is assessed consistently. (self-study, teachers, Endicott Survey)

For the most part, teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure that students revise and improve their work. Writing assignments are broken down into various stages: outlining, first draft, final draft. These stages are peer- and teacher-edited, giving students feedback that allows them to revise their work at various stages of the process. Individual teachers in math and science offer options for students to improve their work on assessments, including test retakes and error analysis (correcting mistakes for credit.) In the arts, students self-assess and revise their work with feedback from the teachers. Overall, students are given opportunities to re-do their work before a final assessment is made. An examination of student work, however, shows that there is little written feedback. Providing more and more detailed written feedback on student work will help students to improve their academic skills; not providing specific written feedback at the end of a summative assessment may limit student progress on their next assessment in the course. (self-study, teachers, student work)

Teachers informally use a variety of formative assessments to make timely adjustments to their instruction in order to improve student learning. Teachers also collaborate informally with members of their departments and other staff member to share information and strategies for formative assessments. Homework, quizzes, study guides, and classroom observations are some examples of formative assessments used to identify or define those skills that require additional instruction. Daily homework gives the teacher immediate feedback about how thoroughly students grasp the skills previously introduced. If needed, material is reviewed prior to presenting new lessons. Failure to provide dedicated additional time for teachers and department collaboration may limit the school's ability to strengthen formative assessment strategies. (self-study, classroom observations, teachers)

Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, informally examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional

practice. Departments meet annually to review student performance on the MCAS tests. Many individual teachers examine their own students' work and use the results to revise their curriculum and instructional strategies. There is some informal sharing of student work within some departments by some teachers. Common assessments, at this point, are primarily limited to final exams, and there are few common assessments that are implemented in departments across the curriculum. There is no formal process or protocol or plan for departments to systematically examine student work and to interpret the results. The school has recently implemented the rubrics for its 21st century learning expectations, but there is currently no plan or protocol for examining student work using school-wide rubrics. The absence of a formal process for using data and examining student work prevents the school from effectively aligning instructional practices with the school's core values and beliefs about learning and 21st century skills. (teachers, self-study, administrators)

Grading and reporting practices are not regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. Records indicate that grading and reporting practices have not been reviewed since block scheduling and Rediker software were implemented approximately ten years ago. While teachers believe that grading practices are consistent across the curriculum, there is no current evidence to document this assertion. Administrators and chief instructional leaders are beginning to discuss grading and reporting practices that will better align with the school's core values and beliefs, but the absence of common assessments in most departments does not support grading practices that are consistent across curriculum areas. A grade-point average task force has been formed to determine how to calculate and report grade-point averages, and the capstone task force is in its second year of working to determine how to implement and grade student achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. The school expects that the first report on student progress in meeting the school's core values and learning beliefs will take place in 2012 when this year's freshman class will be at the mid-way point of the capstone project that is due for full implementation in 2014. Thus there is no current attempt to implement actual assessment of current student work and teacher instruction according to the adopted school's 21st learning expectations. Only when grading policies are reviewed will the school be able to implement policies and practices to achieve its core values and beliefs about student learning. Those

students who are assessed in the capstone project will thus have had the benefit of four years of active, consistent, improved teaching and learning. (self-study, teachers, administrators)

Commendations 1.

1. The school's efforts to create an effective measure of student accomplishment through careful creation of assessment for the capstone project
2. Teachers who effectively communicate to students the school's 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals and regularly post agendas and class goals on their boards to inform students of what they are expected to know and be able to do
3. Teachers who communicate the school's 21st century learning expectations before summative assessments
4. Teachers who use data and results to inform changes in the curriculum and instructional practices
5. Teachers' use of formative assessment in their classrooms
6. The many options for students to improve their work on assessments, including test retakes and correcting mistakes for credit

Recommendations

1. Ensure that the school's 21st century learning expectations drive instruction and assessment across all disciplines
2. Create and analyze common assessments that support the school's 21st century learning expectations
3. Implement a protocol for examining student work in all disciplines and provide professional development for all teachers in the protocol
4. Provide professional development on use and interpretation of school-wide rubrics
5. Implement a formal process to ensure that school-wide rubrics are regularly incorporated into all courses

6. Incorporate a common planning time for teachers to analyze data, examine student work, and adjust curriculum and instructional practices based on school assessment findings
7. Implement a formal process to assess whole-school achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations
8. Implement a formal school-wide process to communicate to the students and their families the progress that each student is making in meeting the 21st century learning expectations
9. Provide professional development in instructional practices to include effective use of class time in the block

COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

SUPPORT STANDARDS

School Culture and Leadership

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning

Support Standard



School Culture and Leadership

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

1. The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.
2. The school is equitable, inclusive, and fosters heterogeneity where every student over the course of the high school experience is enrolled in a minimum of one heterogeneously grouped core course (English/language arts, social studies, math, science, or world languages).
3. There is a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 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.

Conclusions

The Quabbin Regional High School community has consciously and continuously built a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all. Student, parent, and teacher handbooks reflect and communicate high expectations for all. A clear demerit system is in place to address discipline issues consistently. The school consciously focuses efforts on programs that support a positive school climate. The Link Crew, Rachel's Challenge, The Gay Straight Student Alliance, and the Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corp (NJROTC) all contribute to this effort. By design the NJROTC program holds students to a high standard and instills a feeling of pride, high expectations, and ownership within the school community. Students report that positive behavior and respect for others is expected, and these qualities are evident through their actions. Because of the Quabbin Regional High School community's diligence in maintaining a safe, positive, and respectful atmosphere, the students enjoy an environment where they feel their voices are heard and where they can express themselves without fear of ridicule or exclusion. (classroom observations, student shadowing, students, teachers)

The school is equitable, inclusive, and fosters heterogeneity. Every student over the course of their high school experience is enrolled in a minimum of one heterogeneously grouped core course in each subject area. Examination of the variety of academic classes available to all students shows that the school strives to be equitable and inclusive. Heterogeneity is fostered in many of the core classes including English, social studies, and foreign languages. Students who want to challenge themselves are allowed to enroll in college prep and AP classes. Over the course of the past five years, administrators and faculty members have supported the elimination of prerequisites that separate students by ability so that students are able to participate in a wider variety of academic courses and are not held back from achieving the educational goals and levels they may aspire to. (principal, subcommittee members, documents)

Quabbin Regional High School has begun to implement a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows

the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. Many of the teachers at Quabbin Regional High School mentor students outside of the classroom as coaches, extracurricular project and class advisors, and as advisors for honors research projects and other independent work. The school implemented a pilot advisory system in January 2010 that became part of the permanent schedule at the beginning of the 2010-11 academic year. Advisories meet every two weeks for 30 minutes and consist of 12-15 students in the same grade level. Students stay with their advisors for the four years they are at the high school. Many teachers report that they would like to standardize advisory practices, and many have requested professional development in this area. The interest in having a more formal structure is echoed by students, who express mixed feelings about advisories, noting that some are engaging and socially relevant while others are "boring" or have no clear purpose. The advisory system is supported by a core group of teachers, but the absence of a formal, collaborative structure, a curriculum, and a focus on student development and needs and the school's 21st century expectations diminishes the program's effectiveness for some students. (teachers, students, self-study)

Professional development for the principal and the professional staff members is somewhat fragmented and would benefit from a more formal plan. Within the department and sometimes across departments collaboration does take place. However, this collaboration is mostly informal. Meetings often take place before or after school or during teacher prep time. Teaching materials and lesson plans are shared among colleagues within some departments. Structured time for department meetings takes place monthly. There is no formal time in the schedule designated as planning and collaboration time, nor is there an official teacher mentoring program. Formal professional development is scheduled three full days and three half days per school year. Many faculty members have been formally trained in the *Understanding by Design* model, and individual teachers have had content-specific professional development in areas of interest from a range of organizations including NEASC, the Blue Ribbon Conference, MSSAA Professional Development, French River Collaborative, Fitchburg State University, Ribas Associates, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Merrimack Education Collaborative, Blackstone Valley Leadership Academy, ACTFL, and MASCA. These organizational presentations have not been well documented nor implemented through

consistent professional discussion and review to ensure effective implementation of the programs. Instructional strategies employed by teachers are observed to be inconsistent. The structure, content, and effectiveness of professional development must become purposeful and relate to instructional needs. (administrators, teachers, classroom observations, self-study)

Quabbin Regional High School has implemented a research-based evaluation and supervisory process that focuses on improved student learning. The school began working with Ribas Associates in June 2010 to provide training for a new evaluation and supervision process. A shift from *The Skillful Teacher* model was made in an effort to coordinate teacher evaluation procedures throughout all buildings in the district. Ribas Associates is recognized by the Massachusetts Department of Education as a researched-based professional development provider and its services are aligned with local initiatives. Teacher evaluators include administrators and chief instructional leaders, and all evaluators have received professional training in implementing this process. However, teachers have not received professional training development addressing the new evaluation model, however. There are currently 10 qualified evaluators at Quabbin Regional High School. Until they receive professional status, non-professional status teachers are evaluated yearly, and their evaluations include a minimum of three observations and five walk-throughs per year. Professional status teachers are evaluated on a two-year cycle, and they have options in the nature of their evaluations: a peer walk-through, a portfolio, peer-coaching, or traditional observation. While these options are available, the majority of teachers have chosen the traditional model of observation; very few use the peer observation or portfolio method, and none have opted for the peer walk-through form of evaluation. Continued professional development is planned to keep evaluators abreast of up-to-date research and best practices. The change in the teacher evaluation process was newly implemented this year. The school will need time to work with the new system before any impact will be obvious, but the administration is committed to the change and ongoing related professional development has been planned. (self-study, principal, Ribas Website, teachers)

The school's organization of time supports research-based instruction and the learning needs of many students, but it allows only limited professional collaboration among teachers. Since

1997, Quabbin Regional High School operates on a block-scheduling system with four 85-minute rotating blocks per day. The administrators and faculty members believe the schedule promotes student engagement, in-depth exploration of topics, and project-based learning. Some teachers express concern that the block schedule is not meeting the needs of all students, however. While some teachers utilize the extended block in a varied, efficient, and engaging manner, others lecture or continue the same activity for a prolonged period of time, producing inconsistent results. Students voice a positive opinion of the schedule, and, along with the administrators, believe it offers them unique opportunities and flexibility. This particular schedule allows senior students to participate in outside internships, and students have the opportunity to take a greater number of courses during four years of high school. Within the current schedule, however, there is no formal regular time set aside for teachers to collaborate. (self-study, administrators, students, teachers)

Personalization and teacher connection with the students can be seen throughout the school. Display cases are filled with statistics and trophies of various athletic teams, club participants and activities, and academic achievers. Student artistic achievements decorate the building in various impressive examples and forms of ceramic, cardboard, painting, and graphics. Posters advocating acceptance and tolerance are also seen throughout the school. Students are respectful of their surroundings and take pride in their work. The school obviously supports and enhances student personalization and recognizes their efforts and achievements. Quabbin Regional High School offers other unique opportunities for students. The science department has an outside greenhouse in which the students grow seedling and plants, and in the spring, students plant a garden. In addition, two science teachers have built a solar-paneled trailer where students may experiment with solar energy. There are numerous after school clubs and athletic opportunities that can aid in enhancing student character and civic duties and can respond to student interests. After school on Wednesdays, students may go to the media center to receive help or individual tutoring, and they may also meet with individual teachers after school as needed, and teachers will follow through. (teachers, students, principal)

In some areas, teachers' student work loads and class sizes enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. According to the Endicott Survey, 68.8% of the students at

Quabbin Regional High School believes that their class sizes are reasonable, and 56.7% of parents feels the number of students in their son/daughter's classes allows the teachers to meet their learning needs. However, fewer than half of the teachers and professional staff members feels that their student load and class sizes enable them to meet the learning needs of individual students. The school does not have a policy on class size. The average student-to-teacher ratio is 15.4 to one. Teacher's work loads and class sizes enable them to meet the needs of their students.(Endicott Survey, self-study, teachers, chief instructional leaders)

Working with other building leaders, the principal provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Because of the principal's teaching background and experience in teaching teachers, her main concern is the improvement of instructional practice. Administrators and instructional leaders have introduced *Understanding by Design*, an instructional strategy that focuses on student skills rather than content as content is used to teach the skills. This coincides with the school's core values and beliefs. The principal is a consistent visual presence in the building and has taken an active role in driving new initiatives to improve teachers' instructional practices. The principal and her leadership team have supported and facilitated the initiation and implementation of such programs as advisory, link crew, and the capstone project, all of which support the core values and beliefs of the school. Faculty meetings are designed to provide teachers with leadership responsibility and investment of purpose around an instructional topic or an important issue for the school. Parents are invited to contribute opinions and ideas through breakfast opportunities with the principal. The principal's leadership plays an important role in the school successfully preparing its students for the 21st century. (self-study, administrators, teachers)

Teachers, students, and parents are sometimes involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership. Quabbin Regional High School uses a traditional model of monthly faculty meetings and monthly department meetings. Chief instructional leaders meet twice a month with the administrative team, and from these meetings, they disseminate information and policy changes to the staff. The monthly department meetings provide an opportunity for faculty members to communicate concerns and/or ideas to their chief instructional leaders to relay these concerns or ideas to the administrative team;

furthermore, teachers often initiate task forces of particular interest that are intended to help the students. Many staff members are participating in the numerous initiatives currently underway at the high school, volunteering their time to the task forces driving each one. These initiatives are still in the formative process, making it difficult for students and all faculty members to take ownership of them. (chief instructional leaders, self-study, teachers, administrators)

A small number of students and parents participated in the NEASC self-evaluation process by joining standards committees. The principal meets periodically with the school advisory council, made up of the principal, faculty members, and parents. A small group of students was involved with the writing of the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. This same group of students has been active with the link crew and the institution of a school-wide advisory program. Moreover, students' opinions were solicited through *Survey Monkey* to guide the development of advisories, and all freshmen who failed at least one class during the first semester have completed a survey that required them to reflect and self-evaluate as to why they failed. Teachers are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making, but only a very limited number of parents and students participate. Student suggestions about starting clubs or drives are generally supported, and students often make presentations to the school council concerning their ideas. The institution of advisories has the potential to increase students' feelings of responsibility and ownership as well. (self-study, *Survey Monkey*, parents, teachers, students)

Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase student engagement in learning. Teachers are currently in the process of implementing new initiatives, particularly formulating lesson plans based on the *Understanding by Design* model with a marked concentration on the core values and beliefs. This continues to be a work in progress, however. Teachers are invested in the process because of their involvement in the creation of curriculum documents and initiation of the work involved in implementing changes to the school and their own practices. Their voices and beliefs have invested in the process through task forces comprised of teacher-led groups that inform the administration of their educated opinions about students, curriculum, and school needs. They do research, help design, and continually regulate the progress of programs; such as, advisory, link crew, the capstone

project, Rachael's Challenge, and the Regional Health Coalition. Teachers are currently implementing the use of school-wide rubrics in their instruction and assessment. The teachers play an important role in implementing new initiatives that positively impacts the overall culture of the school. (administrators, self-study, teachers)

The relationship among school committee members, superintendent, and principal is collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. They respect each other's roles. The school committee members, collectively, and within various subcommittees, view the superintendent and principal as reflective practitioners and educational leaders. They view their role as supportive in nature, relying on the vision of the educational leaders to guide the school's 21st century learning expectations. The superintendent and principal look to the school committee to help implement initiatives they deem valuable to the students who are preparing to live in a rapidly changing global society. The superintendent and principal create the vision, and the school committee presents it to the community to gain the political and financial support necessary to follow through with best practices, programs, and initiatives. The superintendent, who had previously left the district, was invited back because of the value placed on her vision and leadership qualities. Because of the well-defined roles and collegial relationship among these leaders, the school is able to implement initiatives with relative ease as illustrated in the creation of the advisory program. The relationship among the school committee, superintendent, and principal constructively and collaboratively supports an atmosphere that demands excellence and allows for change. (teachers, parents, school committee members, chief instructional leaders, administrators, central office personnel)

The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. The formal job description of the Quabbin Regional High School principal gives the principal the authority to carry out district-wide responsibilities, a leadership role, administrative duties, and professional responsibilities necessary to perform her job effectively. The school committee expresses a belief in the educational leadership of the school, including approval of the performance of the principal, and the superintendent endorses the leadership skills of the principal. Meetings with the principal and staff endorse the fact that

the school committee and superintendent value the principal's input and ability and seek her educational input with regard to important policy and budget decisions that impact the secondary school. (documents, school committee members, principal, culture and leadership subcommittee members)

Commendations

1. The safe, respectful, and accepting atmosphere that permeates the school
2. The high morale demonstrated by the teachers and staff members
3. The exemplary relationship among all members of the leadership team
4. The school's commitment to a vigorous, exemplary NJROTC program
5. Students enjoy an environment where they feel their voices are heard and they are able to participate in a wide variety of challenging academic courses
6. The use of a block schedule for in-depth learning in some classes

Recommendations

1. Define specific goals and objectives for the advisory program and provide a curriculum
2. Create additional opportunities for parents and students to be involved in decision-making
3. Provide planning time for teachers
4. Evaluate the current scheduling model to determine if it meets the needs of all students
5. Provide professional development for the teachers in the Ribas teacher evaluation model
6. Make structure, content, and effectiveness of professional development purposeful and related to instructional needs

Support Standard



School Resources for Learning

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

Conclusions

The school has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified at-risk students, which support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. The nurse, administrators, guidance personnel, and special education services personnel (NAGS) meet bi-weekly to discuss students viewed as at-risk. The focus of this discussion is to create solutions. The school has four certified guidance counselors, two certified social workers who work as adjustment counselors, and a certified psychologist to work with at-risk students. At-risk students may be referred by a teacher or parent through the guidance office. Students who are identified for special education services are provided with a study skills or learning center period once a day. If a teacher needs the skills teacher to support a student, they may send the student during class time. The staff is beginning to develop a comprehensive guidance plan to articulate the guidance experiences of students throughout high school. There is an initial document that has been developed but it has not been fully developed, especially in the areas of parental involvement and methods of working with at-risk students. The school has made an effort to work with students who are at-risk, but a comprehensive plan has not been developed at this time. Although the school has been successful with some students, a comprehensive plan will better serve all students. (teachers, students, administrators)

The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student-support services. The guidance department is in the process of re-vamping the tools used to reach students and their families. Counselors have designed a program to meet with groups of students to inform them of guidance services and educational options, and they meet with individual students once or twice a year to discuss scheduling and future plans. The guidance department is hoping this approach will allow them to serve students in a more proactive manner and avoid reactionary situations. A website, newsletters, parent assemblies, and a DVD of selected presentations are made available to parents. However, parents and faculty members report that they are not sure how to access special services for students in need, nor can they identify all of the available services. Students comment that they believe that the guidance and counseling services have improved recently. The guidance department has made significant efforts to reach parents and modify their approach to student needs, but students will

benefit if the school continues to explore initiatives to make students and parents aware of the services offered by the guidance department. (Endicott Survey, teachers, students, parents)

Support services staff members use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student. With the use of computers that are connected to the school's large area network (LAN) and the Internet, support services staff members are able to create reports, organize information, access information and services, and communicate with students and parents. The one-call system is used to disseminate information regarding support services to involved families. The guidance support services staff members use email, telephone, and fax to communicate with parents, teachers, administrators, and staff members. Information regarding students can be shared internally with the present technology. The current software does not support the tracking or transfer records of students throughout the district, however. Currently, parents are unable to access information through the school's website concerning individual students, and existing computer technology does not serve guidance counselors to keep records of student meetings. Bridges.com is a website used to create online student college and career portfolios. Counselors use laptops, Microsoft *PowerPoint*, and LCD projectors for presentations at workshops and evening programs for parents and students. Students' individual education plans (IEPs) are online and are available to the guidance professionals within the school. Computers in special education rooms are also equipped with adaptive devices as needed, such as magnification for the visually impaired. *AlphaSmart* devices are available for students for note-taking and report-writing. Students have access to the Kurzweil 3000 reader note taker, and there is a variety of books on CDs or downloads from the Internet for students either to read or listen to. Needed technology-based devices are supplied to students to use in all of their classes. Teachers are trained to support the students' use of software and hardware. Updating current technology and investigating new technologies will assist students in achieving the school's learning expectations. (self-study, counselors, school resources subcommittee)

School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff. There are four certified guidance counselors with a student load of approximately 200 students per counselor. There are also two fully certified social workers who work as

adjustment counselors and a fully certified psychologist based in the school. The school's health services have two full-time equivalent registered nurses to provide preventive and direct intervention services and a certified athletic trainer who works with the student body. The guidance department has begun to write curriculum that emphasizes group outreach. Several group sessions held this year include programs on bullying, *Making it Count*, and a *Rachel's Challenge* assembly presentation that resulted in the establishment of *A Friends of Rachel's Club* in the school. Meetings are held for parents in the evening covering topics such as financial aid and the college application process, but attendance is poor. The school program requires greater parental involvement and more activities for the students to be successful. Guidance counselors and students meet once or twice a year to discuss their program of studies. While guidance counselors endeavor to deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers, the school's location limits their options. Establishment of a formal process to collect and analyze ongoing, relevant assessment data and feedback from the community and students will improve services. (Endicott Survey, guidance counselors, teachers, students)

The school's health services department has an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff members and two full-time equivalent registered nurses to provide preventative and direct intervention services. These services are delivered in accordance with the district's written policies, procedures, and requirements of state law relative to vision, hearing, body-mass index screening, immunization, and child abuse reporting. Confidentiality is maintained through the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines. Direct intervention services include health appraisal, counseling, communicable disease control, emergency services, and first aid. Safety and health issues with accommodations for individual students are communicated in writing to classroom teachers via 504 or nursing care plans. Modifications to the building are implemented according to student needs. Nurses are involved with administrators, guidance counselors and special education teachers, individualized education plans, 504 plans, curriculum accommodation team meetings, and regular team meetings. Emergency service providers and referrals are readily available. Safety for the school community is provided through ongoing relationships between the school nurse and the local

public health and EMS personnel as well as the town's fire and police department personnel. As part of daily service, the nurse conducts ongoing health assessments as a result of student initiated visits or by request from the nurse, parents, or staff members. Review of daily logs, year end reports, youth risk survey results, and staff and parent input provides data to guide decision-making. (self-study, health professionals, guidance counselors, school resources subcommittee)

The Quabbin Regional High School Media Center services are integrated into the curriculum in some areas, but this department does not have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff members. The school's media center staff includes a certified media teacher who is not a certified library media specialist and two full-time educational support professionals. Additionally, student clerks provide assistance in clerical duties through their mass media communications course that is taught by the media teacher. Students are trained to assist classroom teachers in troubleshooting problems with hardware or software issues. The media teacher provides an orientation in library media resources to middle school and 9th grade classes at the beginning of each school year. Instruction on media resources and their uses for classroom research is provided through some research workshops that target classes where a teacher utilizes the media center's resources for a specific assignment. As part of the administrative team, the media teacher participates in bi-weekly meetings of chief instructional leaders. The media teacher also consults with teachers about their curriculum needs and how the media center can accommodate these needs. However, media services do not take the lead in these consultations to broaden the offering for students, and the media teacher offers only limited support for the school's curriculum. The media teacher attends all technology meetings for the district, involving himself in the decision-making process for the school's technology needs. There is a wide range of resources available to students through digital books, and other regional lending services. As a result of limited computer resources, teachers have expressed concerns over difficulty in scheduling time in the media center and in scheduling use of computer labs or mobile carts. The school needs more up-to-date computers for student use. The media center is available to staff members and students 45 minutes prior to the start of the school day, one hour after school on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, two hours after school on Wednesday, and one half hour after school on Friday. During the school day, students are

able to go to the media center in a class for research purposes, individually with a pass from a classroom teacher, and also during their lunch break. Independent learning is supported by the Virtual High School computer system housed in the media center. The media teacher solicits recommendations for learning materials from teachers to support their individual courses. Although the media teacher does not do a formal assessment of the media center's programs, there is ongoing communication with teachers and staff members about services offered. Through its hours of operation the media center is available to students and helps them achieve the school's academic expectations. The library media services at Quabbin Regional High School support the schools 21st century learning expectations. (teachers, students, media center personnel)

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 members. Quabbin Regional High School has four licensed special education teachers, six paraprofessionals, a school psychologist, two adjustment counselors, a team chair, and a therapeutic program which includes one teacher and one education support person. These staff members are supported by a clinical coordinator and a board-certified behavioral analyst who meets the needs of identified students on individual education plans. The director of guidance facilitates 504 plans and is the program coordinator of English language learners and also integrates design and instruction for emerging English language learners. A majority of special education students is enrolled in regular classes and has one study skills/learning center class to address their needs. Administrators and teachers report that they are understaffed to deliver the current model and maintain that the block scheduling is an additional challenge for these students. Students are able to meet the state standards for graduation, but some students struggle to meet the district requirements for graduation. Special education teachers attend annual, initial, and 3-year re-evaluation and manifestation determination meetings, write individualized education plans, and monitor progress reports and bi-weekly reports. Special educators collaborate with general education teachers regarding modification of curriculum, and advise teachers on strategies in the classroom. Six paraprofessionals provide support to teachers and students in their classrooms. Project Involve provides various pull-out academic and life skills classes for the neediest students. The school's director of guidance creates and oversees

educational proficiency plans and remedial programming to prepare all students for the MCAS testing and coordinates all 504 programming. The team chair leads all high school meetings that involve the student's IEP and schedules all annual three-year re-evaluations and initial meetings. It is the team chair's responsibility to provide parents with the Quabbin Regional High School Parent's Rights Brochure. The team chair is responsible for all accommodations on standardized testing. The school psychologist completes all academic and cognitive testing for special education students and attends meetings to provide accommodations and recommendations contained in his assessment reports. The school adjustment counselor provides individual and group counseling sessions for all students in need of services. Although there are concerns about the delivery of services, students' needs are being met. (self-study, special education staff, administrators)

Commendations

1. The integration of the health care services department
2. The inclusion of an athletic trainer in the health service department
3. The hours of operation providing availability of the media center to students and staff
4. The Link Crew program's provision of transitional support to students entering the high school

Recommendations

1. Complete the development of a comprehensive guidance curriculum
2. Investigate technologies to better support student services
3. Increase technology availability to all students
4. Examine alternative models for delivery of special education services
5. Provide increased and adequate staffing to meet the needs of special education students

Support Standard



Community Resources for Learning

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

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

Conclusions

Funding for school programs has been diminishing over several years with decreases in state aid, enrollment, and tax revenue. The district has tried to minimize the cuts in staffing and course offerings while limiting budget increases for professional development, technology, instructional materials, and supplies. Despite the decreases in the school budget, the school has continued to maintain facilities and necessary supplies for classrooms and support staff members. The technology infrastructure and capacity does not adequately meet the needs of the school, however, the student population has inadequate access to computers. Teachers have also identified the need for increased professional development in areas relating to technology, the use of technology in the classroom, and training in the *Understanding by Design* curriculum initiative. Lack of adequate funding hinders the school from providing a range of services, programs, equipment, and supplies. (teachers, facility tour, self-study)

The school and grounds are well maintained and the physical plant and grounds are clean and in good repair. The maintenance department is well organized and staffed and maintenance supplies are accessible and inventoried. There are standing contracts with trained vendors to ensure the maintenance of the infrastructure (boilers, pumps, and heating and cooling systems, etc.) Additionally, the school district has maintained logs of maintenance cycles to ensure proper operation. There have been discussions of long-range plans to address the capital issues as they relate to facilities, grounds, and repair of the atrium roof. The physical plant and environment of the school positively impact teaching and learning in the school. The professionalism and the skill level of the custodial and maintenance staff members benefit students and enhance the school climate and culture at Quabbin Regional High School. (facility tour, self-study, teachers, students)

The school does not have a comprehensive long-range plan to address its capital improvement and upkeep although the school has identified some projects that need to be addressed. Additionally, it does not have a formal plan based on changing demographics to address future needs for staffing, programs, and services, but the district has contracted with NESDEC for an enrollment projection study within the district. There is a district plan for technology procurement and replacement on file. The absence of a comprehensive long-range capital

improvement plan could have an increasingly negative effect on the ability of teachers and staff members to provide high quality instruction and programs to their students. (facility tour, school committee members, self-study)

The administrators and staff members are actively involved in development of the school's budget and allocation of budget resources. There are several steps throughout the year where input is gathered interdepartmentally and through individual teacher requests. Chief instructional leaders meet with individual teachers to discuss these priorities. They also meet with the principal to review departmental requests. In late December, the principal submits a budget proposal to the district's administrative team whereupon the budget for the entire high school is compiled and reviewed at several administrative meetings. A preliminary budget is then sent to the budget subcommittee of the school committee for review and consideration. The budget subcommittee members usually make a recommendation to the full committee at its February meeting. All budget subcommittee and school committee meetings are open to the public and there is a special public hearing on the budget. The assessments are then sent to the town to be placed on the annual town meeting warrant. If the budget is not approved by the voters, the school committee and district administrative team determine how the reductions will be applied. When the school budget is finalized, the principal may request reprioritization from the chief instructional leaders. The faculty members and administrators work cooperatively to develop a budget proposal which represents the needs and services of the school. (facility tour, support staff, teachers, panel presentation)

The site and instructional areas support the delivery of high quality instruction and services. There are suitable areas inside and outside of the school to support the athletic programs. There are sufficient teacher work spaces, classrooms, and laboratory spaces to support the academic needs of the school. The dining areas, meeting spaces, administrative and support service offices, and work areas are appropriate. The alternative energy trailer, greenhouse, garden, and community-supported composting facility, provide students with unique hands-on learning opportunities. An area of concern, however, is the shared use of the library/media space between the middle and high school. The room is in constant use and often described as overcrowded when several classes are there. Thus, except for the media center, the site and

school design meet the academic and extracurricular needs of the high school's programs.
(teachers, facility tours, school committee members)

The school maintains proper documentation regarding compliance with local, state, and federal regulations and requirements. The school district's plant and facilities manager is responsible for maintaining all documentation and for scheduling all required inspections from local, state, and federal agencies. The documents are kept in the manager's office for review at all times. The maintenance staff members maintain a high standard for the quality of their work and the appearance and safety of their school. Communicating repair needs are expedited and tracked throughout the district with the *SchoolDude* network-based reporting system. The school has an exceptionally well maintained facility. (facility tour, teachers, students, administrators)

The school has made efforts to contact parents through local media, telephone, and Internet-based sources. The school maintains an informational website that is accessible to parents and students. The school also publishes a tri-monthly newsletter, publicizes events in local newspapers, and holds two parent open houses over the course of the academic year. Planned report cards will feature an upcoming event corner, and the school utilizes a one-call network system to keep parents directly informed of school events and scheduling. Parents are invited to instrumental and vocal music concerts, drama productions, art fairs, health fairs, the National Honor Society induction, NJROTC events, and the academic awards ceremony, all of which showcase student work. Some teachers also invite parents to their classrooms as guest speakers. The principal holds informal meeting on the first Tuesday of every month, giving all parents an opportunity to meet with her prior to the beginning of the school day. Parents of grade 9 students who receive failure warnings regarding their students are contacted by all teachers, and a contact form is tracked by the guidance office. Despite these efforts, there is a large number of parents who are not engaging in the school community. Only 25% of parents responded to the Endicott Survey. Thirty-eight percent of these parents believes that there are adequate communications between parents and staff members regarding academic endeavors. Parent attendance at outreach meetings is low, and teachers voice concerns about poor attendance at parent teacher conferences. These numbers indicate that the efforts to engage families must be extended and increased. The school needs to overcome the difficulties of communicating over

a very large district with no cable services in some communities. Communication with all parents is critical for enlisting them as partners with educators to assist and enhance student performance. (teachers, self-study, parents, Endicott Survey)

There is a variety of opportunities for students and teachers to engage within the community. The school has formed a partnership with The Quabbin Education Foundation (QUEST) as a source for teachers and students to apply for opportunity grants. All students have internship opportunities. The internships sites include Advanced Auto Parts, JT builders, Old Sturbridge Village, Second Chance Animal Shelter, and Marty and Sons Excavators. Parents are involved in the school council, the school committee, the NEASC accreditation committees, and the special education advisory committee. There are opportunities for continuing education and dual enrollment with Mount Wachusett Community College, Clark University, Springfield Technical Community College, and Fitchburg State University. The development of positive relationships between Quabbin Regional High School and the community enhances the academic readiness of their students. (administrators, self-study, teachers, school committee members, panel presentation)

Commendations

1. The dedication and pride of the school's maintenance personnel
2. The school's physical plant, grounds, and facilities that are exceptionally well kept and maintained
3. The principal's informal drop-in hour meeting times

Recommendations

1. Provide an appropriate technology infrastructure to support the school's 21st century teaching and learning
2. Fund technology to ensure that all students achieve 21st century learning expectations through a robust and rigorous learning experience
3. Provide adequate funding to increase professional development in the use of technology
4. Develop and fund a comprehensive capitol improvement plan

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

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

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Commission has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Commission within sixty 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 in the Appendix on page 15. 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.

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

VISITING COMMITTEE

ROSTER OF TEAM MEMBERS

Evaluator	School	City	State
Scott E. Knief	Carver Middle High School	Carver	MA
Amy Bacon	Quaboag Regional Middle High School	Warren	MA
Frank Barnes	Mount Anthony Union High School	Bennington	VT
Paul Bavuso	Wakefield High School	Wakefield	MA
Leah Clark	Newtown High School	Sandy Hook	CT
Margaret Frieswyk	Avon Public School	Avon	MA
Mark Galligan	Mohawk Trail Regional High School	Shelburne Falls	MA
Kevin Hart	Oakmount Regional High School	Ashburnham	MA
Mary Lucus	High School of Commerce	Springfield	MA
Phillip Moore	Fitchburg High School	Fitchburg	MA
Richard Renaud	Monson High School	Monson	MA
Frederick Silva	William E. Tolman High School	Pawtucket	RI
Dara Snider	Westborough High School	Westborough	MA
Karen Thorn	Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District	Orange	MA

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

Commission on Public Secondary Schools

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

- elimination of fine arts, practical arts, and student activities
- diminished upkeep and maintenance of facilities
- significantly decreased funding
- cuts in the level of administrative and supervisory staffing
- cuts in the number of teachers and/or guidance counselors
- 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