

New England Association of  
Schools and Colleges



Commission on Public Secondary Schools

***REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE***

**Hull High School**

**Hull, Massachusetts**

November 6-9, 2011

Brian McCann, Chair  
Kevin Turner, Assistant Chair  
Michael Devine, Principal

## **STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS**

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

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

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

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  | Page |
|--|------|
| Statement On Limitations .....   | 2    |
| Introduction .....   | 4    |
| Overview of Findings   |      |
| Quality of the Self-study  |      |
| Discussion of Significant Findings regarding   |      |
| Teaching and Learning and the Support of Teaching and Learning                         |      |
| School and Community Profile .....   | 13   |
| School’s Statement of Core Values, Beliefs, and Expectations for Student Learning..... | 17   |
| Teaching and Learning Standards.....   | 18   |
| Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations .....                                  | 19   |
| Curriculum.....  | 26   |
| Instruction.....   | 38   |
| Assessment of and for Student Learning.....  | 45   |
| Support of Teaching and Learning Standards .....                                       | 59   |
| School Culture and Leadership.....   | 60   |
| School Resources for Learning.....   | 75   |
| Community Resources for Learning .....   | 88   |
| Follow-Up Responsibilities.....  | 99   |
| APPENDICES   |      |
| A. Roster of Team Members .....  | 102  |
| B. Commission Policy on Substantive Change.....  | 103  |

## 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 Hull High School, a committee of seven members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people.

The self-study of Hull High School extended over a period of 16 school months from September 2010 to November 2011. The visiting committee was pleased to note that students and parents joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

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

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

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

A visiting committee of 16 evaluators was assigned by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Hull High School. The Committee members spent four days in Hull, 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 school teachers, high school administrators, and the public, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Hull High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- more than 40 hours shadowing a variety of students during parts of the school day
- a total of 15 hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)
- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facility
- individual meetings with 31 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 team consensus. Sources of evidence for each conclusion drawn by the visiting committee appear in parenthesis in the Standards sections of the report. The seven Standards for Accreditation reports include commendations and recommendations that in the team's judgment will be helpful to the school as it works to improve teaching and learning and to better meet Commission Standards.

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

Hull High School can be characterized as an educational community that has the mutual support of its faculty, staff, students, and administrators, but does not have the proportionate economic support from its town. This disconnect has resulted in the downsizing of many programs and classes crucial to Hull students realizing their potential. The Hull High school community has been creative in getting additional support to fund its co-curricular programs, such as athletics and theater. The Hull High community sees the principal as the school's educational leader who has been the catalyst in helping the school transition to 21st century learning expectations.

At the heart of Hull High School is the relationship between students and adults in the community that results in tremendous pride in the community.

The administrators and co-chairs could not have done any more to help facilitate the accreditation visit and make all team members feel a part of the Hull High School experience. Teachers were readily available and helpful from the Sunday afternoon visit through Wednesday afternoon. The ability to have teachers willing to have conversations about their teaching, student expectations, the mission statement, and the struggle to achieve current 21st

century learning expectations allowed the visiting committee an authentic glimpse into Hull High School and its classrooms.

### **Teaching and Learning at Hull High School**

The Hull High School community has created a safe, nurturing environment for its students, with the school's pride resonating throughout the community of Hull. Much work has been done in the past three school years under the school's current principal to transition to core values and 21st century learning expectations. Stakeholders from the educational community were included in this revision. The high school's leadership team created a dynamic and inclusive process that resulted in the establishment of CIRCLS, an acronym for the school's core values. The school has quickly realized, however, that the school's current 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and corresponding analytic rubrics are unmanageable at present. The school is already planning to revise, adopt, and implement a streamlined update of the school-wide expectations. As well, Hull High School is looking to report its findings -- currently not in place -- when it transitions to new administrative software in 2012.

The establishment of Professional Learning Communities has been effective for professional development and collaboration, though the community would benefit from additional formal time for teachers to collaborate on interdisciplinary learning. The faculty is committed in its regular use of both formative and summative assessments and uses the data to inform instruction. Teachers desire more formal time in this area as well in order to collaborate and reflect departmentally on assessment to drive curriculum and instructional change. At present, the teaching staff at Hull High School is committed to engaging students in the learning

process. All members of the Hull educational community would like to see the reinstatement of programs at the high school, especially vocational, technology, and business courses that have fallen victim to budget cuts in past years.

### **Support of Teaching and Learning at Hull High School**

The principal is seen as the educational leader of Hull High School. After facilitating the establishment of the school's current statement of core values and 21st century learning expectations, he will now lead the charge in the revisions. The re-establishment of lead teacher positions will help to facilitate two-way communication from the administration to the teaching staff as well as provide authentic co-ownership in curriculum revision and budget development that is in accord with the revised 21st century learning expectations.

The high school's leadership has created a safe culture at Hull High School that provides opportunities for students to exhibit their pride and celebrates their accomplishments on a regular basis. Personal electronics and social media have been successfully integrated into the daily structure of the school, increasing its media literacy, integrity, and creativity. Hull High School has worked hard in past years to decrease its drop-out rate and should seek additional alternative pathways to graduation to enhance its current prevention strategies.

Hull High School is housed in a beautiful facility that is meticulously maintained on a daily basis. The pristine building reflects the positive school climate that has been maintained during recent periods of financial instability and insufficiency. The town's allocation of resources to

the schools does not allow for the facility to be used to its greatest potential, thus the elimination of crucial programming at the high school. The entire Hull community needs to secure reliable sources of school funding that will diminish its present reliance on the goodwill of the local community.

## School and Community Profile

Hull High School is a public high school currently serving students in grades 9 through 12. The school is located in Hull, Massachusetts, jutting out into the ocean north of Hingham and Cohasset. Hull is the smallest town by land area in Plymouth County and the fourth smallest in the state. As of the 2010 census, Hull has a combined population of 11,786 people, 4,522 households, and 2,821 families residing in the town. The ethnic makeup of the town is 96.95% White, 0.46% Black or African American, 0.31% Native American, 0.89% Asian, 0.05% Pacific Islander, 0.46% from other races, and 0.89% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino residents constituted 1.09% of the population. Out of the 4,522 households, 26.2% had children under the age of 18. The average household size was 2.44 and the average family size was 3.06. The ethnic makeup of Hull High School reflects that of the town. The median income for a household in the town was \$52,377 and the median income for a family was \$62,294. About 5.6% of families and 8.3% of the population live below the poverty line, including 12.7% of those under age 18 and 9.5% of those aged 65 or over. English is the primary language spoken by 99% of the student population and the major employers in the area are: Jake's Seafood Restaurant, Riddles Supermarket, and South Shore Catering. The majority of town employment is seasonal in nature, summer time being the season when most students are employed.

Three schools comprise the Hull Public School District. These three schools are the Jacobs Elementary School, the Memorial Middle School, and Hull High School. In addition to a total high school population of 344 (as of September, 2011), the Jacobs Elementary School has a population of 555 students and the Memorial Middle School enrolls 275 students. There are 31 full-time teaching faculty at Hull High School, giving the school a ratio of 11.09 students per 1 teacher. Individual teachers carry an average course load of 80 students with an average class

size of 22. Instructional faculty teaches 5 periods out of a 7 period day. The other two periods are reserved for a planning period, for performing a duty (i.e. ISS Duty or cafeteria duty), or meeting with other teachers in their Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), which meet every other day. PLCs were introduced in the 2011-2012 school year as a way for teachers to collaborate about school wide academic expectations and core values through the investigation of school-wide “problems of practice” (i.e. How does the staff increase SAT scores? How does the staff decrease the drop-out rate?) Teachers took, on average, 4.5 sick/personal days in the 2010-2011 and engaged (on average) in 2 extra days of professional development outside of those days required by the Department of Education.

Hull High School has enacted an innovative and more inclusive program for keeping students in school that reflects the new mission to create a true community of learners. During the 2010-2011 school year, 76 different students were assigned in-school suspension. There were 187 days of in-school suspension assigned to these students. Also, 28 different students served out of school suspensions. There were 179 days of out-of-school suspension assigned to these students. During the 2010-2011 school year, three students were excluded from Hull High School, and two students were expelled.

As of 2010, the graduation rate at Hull High School was 91.1%. Since then, inclusion programs such as study skills and after-school tutoring have been instituted to increase the graduation rate. Of those students who did not graduate with their class, only 5.7 % dropped out of school – the remaining 3.2% were either held back or have not actively withdrawn from school. 86% of the 2010 graduating class attended 2 year or 4 year colleges. In 2010, 81 students sat for Advanced Placement Exams given in 6 different subjects including: US History, Spanish, English Literature/Language, Biology, and Environmental Science.

High School has productive parent/community groups that exist to support student learning. First and foremost, parent and community members jointly represent the Hull Boosters Club. Traditionally, the Hull Boosters Club has provided both personnel and financial support to the Athletic Department, Theater Arts Program, as well as providing financial support for activities that enhance the academic curriculum. Moreover, their fundraising efforts have generated over \$185,000 to save the Athletic Department and its programs during the past two school years. The Friends of Hull Hockey, Hull Academic Support Coalition (HASC), Friends of Hull Theater Arts, Graduation Night Committee, Parent Teacher Organization, and several Hull Youth Sports organizations provide additional co-curricular and academic support.

Even though Hull has a limited number of local businesses, the school has utilized every available partnership opportunity through the Chamber of Commerce. This valuable partnership has encouraged local businesses to provide many internship opportunities for our students. Volunteer partnerships with Elder Services allows HHS students to volunteer their time to clean the interior/ exterior of houses, do yard work, and shovel snow for those who need it. Business internships are available through Nantasket Seafood, Riddles Supermarket, The Department of Public Works, Department of Mental Health, Nantasket Pharmacy, and Mitchell Construction. Additionally, Hull High School has been awarded the Workforce Investment Grant. This grant helps develop occupational and soft skills in participants through paid internships. Student participants must agree to stay in school while working in this program. There have also been extra work-study hours available for at risk students to help the janitorial staff clean the school premises.

During the 2011-2012 school year, students have also been given the opportunity to expand their knowledge in coursework through Virtual High School (VHS). VHS, which is administered by the school librarian, offers supplementary courses to our students, Advanced

Placement courses, and also allows some students to gain credit recovery through online coursework. New technology has been installed and is in use by teachers in all departments. New SMART Boards, new computer lab equipment including a fully dedicated world language laboratory, and library-media equipment enables HHS students to access a variety of information and to achieve targeted 21st century learning expectations.

Focus areas for the 2011-2012 school year have included revamping the professional development schedule and the content offered through PD courses, redevelopment of the teacher observation schedule, de-leveling courses to offer more opportunities to students, a new advisory program and schedule of activities that is focused on our core values, and reaching out to parents and community members through popular media sites such as: the HHS Blog (hosted by BlogSpot), Facebook and Twitter.

## School's Statement of Core Values, Beliefs, and Expectations for Student Learning

### **Hull High School Mission Statement**

Hull High School is committed to academic excellence, personal responsibility, and the development of life-long learners within the global community.

### **Hull High School Core Values**

#### *Life-long Learning*

A culture that develops essential skills and stimulates intellectual curiosity to promote **life-long learning**.

#### *Integrity*

A culture that expects **integrity** and honorable behavior.

#### *Responsibility*

A culture where students take **responsibility** for their academic progress, behavior, and wellness.

#### *Creativity*

A culture that provides a rigorous curriculum promoting **creativity** in all classrooms.

#### *Citizenship*

A culture that encourages collaboration, respects diversity, and empowers students with the rights, privileges, and duties of **citizenship**.

#### *Service*

A culture that promotes **service** to others.

### **Hull High School Expectations for Student Learning**

#### **A Hull High School Student:**

##### Academic

1. will write effectively for a variety of purposes
2. will read actively and critically
3. will present information and ideas fluently and comfortably before an audience
4. will be a competent problem solver
5. will utilize and evaluate creative skills
6. will use technology appropriately to acquire, integrate, evaluate, create, and impart information in a knowledge economy

##### Civic

7. will develop the knowledge and understanding necessary for informed citizenship, social action, and collaboration.

##### Social

8. will demonstrate a knowledge of world cultures
9. will understand and apply wellness skills

# **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 Hull High School (HHS) school community engaged in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning. Since 2009, the school community at Hull High School has been collaboratively revising and developing the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. Faculty members met in groups to discuss the qualities they wanted to see in a mission statement, core values, and 21st century learning expectations. The information gathered was presented to faculty members, parents, and community members for refinement, agreement, and precise wording. The steering committee revised and finalized an NEASC student survey form which was presented to students in an advisory period in September 2009. The document revision results were voted upon and agreed upon by the teachers and adopted by the school in faculty meetings as well as a school assembly for the students. The school has created an acronym to represent core values, CIRCLS (Creativity, Integrity, Respect, Citizenship, Leadership, and Service). This is represented in poster format and displayed in many places throughout the school. The new mission statement and the list of core values, beliefs, and learning expectations are published on the school website. According to the Endicott Survey, 75.5% of students, 95.3% of teachers, and 89.5% of parents are familiar with Hull High School's Core Values and Beliefs. Additionally, 78.9% of parents believes that the core values statement represents what the community values about student learning. Most parents and faculty members are able to explain the core values accurately. Students exhibit these values through their experiences at HHS. Although the core values have been recently adopted, these values are already a reflection of who the HHS and its community members strive to be. This set of collaboratively developed core values and beliefs about learning

expectations will be essential in guiding the school's future work. (Endicott Survey, faculty members, school leadership, facility tour)

The school has challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, civic, and social competencies and which are defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted high levels of achievement. Currently, Hull High School believes that a student should be able to meet nine expectations for student learning. These learning expectations are published on the school website. According to the Endicott Survey, 49.3% of HHS students, 69.8% of staff members, and 78.9% of parents believe that Hull High School's 21st century learning expectations are challenging. Each learning expectation has an assessment rubric assigned to it. After numerous attempts to revise and initiate the school wide rubrics, they were distributed and piloted during the 2009-2010 school year. These rubrics were revised for the 2011-2012 school year, and they are currently being used in some classes at HHS. Most of the rubrics are consistent in language and assessment characteristics and also include specific criteria that will measure levels of competency from "exceeds expectations" through "does not meet expectations". Each department has been assigned one or more specific and appropriate learning expectation to measure in their own discipline. Students comment that they are not aware of how the teachers connect content and skills with the learning expectations in their classroom; however, according to the Endicott Survey, 75.8% of students is familiar with rubrics that assess assignments and other class work. The Endicott Survey results show that not all faculty members have adopted these rubrics (53.5%). Practices suggest that many teachers do not thoroughly understand how to utilize the school-wide rubrics. When the revision of the Hull High School 21st century learning expectations is complete and

implementation begins, teaching and learning will benefit. (school leadership, self-study, Endicott Survey, teachers, students)

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.

At the start of the school day, the mission statement is read as part of the announcements.

There are many internships, clubs, and committees that support the core values. These include the National Honor Society, HHS Student Advisory Council, student government, student council, and TALK, a student awareness forum. When the new school was renovated in 2005, 24 new bulletin boards were added to those that already exist. These bulletin boards showcase the creativity of Hull High School students. Students in the art department have painted murals that reflect the values of the school community on the walls in many of the hallways.

The school has had a visit from Sidewalk Sam, a local artist, who instructs and inspires students to create meaningful public art. There is a great deal of enthusiasm to be of service in Hull High School students. Students sometimes drop in to the main office and ask if anything needs to be done. In addition to informal attempts at providing service, one grade level per school year is assigned to a specific service project, such as helping at the local senior center. It is apparent from the students that these endeavors are important learning experiences. Hull High School has a strict discipline policy for all students. Responsibility and integrity are reflected in the published disciplinary guidelines. Students are expected to be good citizens. According to the Endicott Survey, 76.7% of faculty members believes that the school's core values and beliefs are actively reflected in the school culture. Hull High School is working toward actively incorporating 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations into the school culture, curriculum, instruction,

and assessment. Technology has increased greatly over the past few years. Currently, there are seven SMART Boards being used at Hull High School, with at least one in each discipline. Additionally technology and building resources have been added that include new computers in the library and computer labs, a fully upgraded foreign language laboratory, and expanded wireless Internet connection. New laptops and Netbooks are also available for use by selected teachers and students. The school community has also embraced the use of cell phones and promotes their responsible use during the school day. Students are allowed to use smart phones at certain times during the day to record homework and assignments. Additionally, in the Media Literacy class, students are taught about appropriate use and the privacy policies of specific social media websites. The school administration has also started to use Facebook and has created a blog to communicate with parents, students, and the community. However, during visits to the classrooms and discussions with students, there is very little evidence to connect most of the 21st century learning expectations to the lessons being taught, and there is a great variation from class to class on the use of school-wide rubrics. The Hull High School culture reflects many observable student practices of the civic and social competencies as well as many of the core values and beliefs, but most of the 21st century learning expectations are not clearly implemented in the majority of the school's classrooms and instructional approaches. Although the school is in the process of revision and implementation of its core values and beliefs, their effect on teaching and learning will be more fully realized when all stakeholders connect the school experience to the school's 21st century learning expectations. (Endicott Survey, panel presentation, students, teacher meetings, facility tour, student work, self-study)

The school regularly reviews and revisits its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school community priorities. In the spring of 2009, Hull High School began the process of revising and finalizing a mission statement, core values and beliefs, and learning expectations appropriate for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Faculty, staff, students, and parents were involved in this process that has taken place during in-service days and faculty meetings over the past two years. Student surveys were distributed during advisory periods and representatives of the student body were present at the chairpersons meetings. The 21st century learning expectations were developed by a faculty-driven team that included input from every department. All departments felt it important to include the key learning expectations they taught. The result was nine 21st century learning expectations that would be divided among different departments. During the 2011-2012 school years, Professional Learning Communities were formed. Each PLC has the responsibility of researching, developing, and implementing a plan of action that addresses a school-wide problem of practice. During a meeting with district administrators, the group collectively agreed on the importance of a process and procedure to review and revise the 21st century learning expectations. A revision of the 21st century learning expectations will initiate the action needed to connect to the teaching and learning at Hull High School. (teachers, teacher interviews, students, school leadership)

### **Commendations**

1. The dynamic and collaborative process used to establish a set of core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations
2. The involvement of faculty members, students and community representatives in an inclusive process to commit to a set of core values and beliefs about learning
3. The development of school-wide analytic rubrics

## **Recommendations**

1. Revise and implement the 21st century learning expectations
2. Design a process and procedure for regular review and revision of core values, beliefs, and the 21st century learning expectations



## Teaching and Learning Standard Curriculum

*The written and taught curriculum is designed to result in all students achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century expectations for student learning. The written curriculum is the framework within which a school aligns and personalizes the school's 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 Hull High School (HHS) curriculum is not purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations. The learning expectations are reflected in a curriculum that provides students with the opportunity to achieve success in meeting the school's 21st century learning expectations, but although specific curricular areas have assumed responsibility for individual 21st century learning expectations, this is not identified within the individual, course-specific curriculum documents. Therefore, there is no information explicitly indicating at which grade level or in which courses students have the opportunity to practice specific 21st century learning expectations. Opportunities for students to practice many of the academic, civic, and social expectations exist in classrooms. Seventy-five point eight percent of students reports that most teachers use rubrics to grade work, but student work shows that, while some teachers are using rubrics that are school-wide rubrics based on 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, other teachers are using course rubrics developed by teachers. Curriculum maps used to guide instruction do not explicitly refer to 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, but they do frequently make use of the expectations because these are imbedded in instruction. For example, in World History, there is a wide use of writing activities along with the school-wide writing rubric while in AP English, the listening rubric is used during class discussions. Parents, students, and teachers agree that students are expected to write frequently in all courses, fulfilling the first of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. However, many teachers struggle to incorporate more than one of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations into their curriculum. The school is planning for a new curriculum template that will include space for identifying expectations. This would make it more likely that newly-developed courses, at least, would be consciously designed to teach students to meet

specific 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Because the written curriculum does not explicitly identify the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, it is difficult to know if all students have the opportunity to practice these goals. (self-study, student shadowing, student work, teacher interview, teachers, students, Endicott Survey)

The curriculum is written in a common format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills. No reference is made to the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, however. On curriculum maps, there are lists of descriptions of instructional strategies to be used, but there is no reference to assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic rubrics. Curriculum maps are used as a common format for identifying essential questions, outlining targeted concepts, content, and skills. These maps also illustrate links to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. However, the maps do not explicitly reference the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and, while there are lists of assessment practices within the curriculum documents, there is no specific reference to school-wide rubrics, and there are only limited references to course-specific rubrics. The curriculum maps provide a sequence of what is taught throughout the year, but they do not provide specific lesson plans or specific description of instructional strategies. While most courses are described in curriculum maps, there are several course offerings that do not have corresponding curriculum maps including Foundations of English, Speech Communication, Creative Writing, and Jazz/Rock Ensemble. Thus, the written curriculum is used in a common format throughout the school to guide instruction, but there is limited reference to written curriculum during instruction. HHS offers additional opportunities outside of the traditional classroom for students to achieve the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. For example, Virtual High School (VHS) programs are also offered with curriculum determined by VHS, and these are supported

by the librarian who has access to student progress to monitor and mentor students throughout the courses. There is written curriculum in a common format used by the majority of teachers at HHS in the form of curriculum maps, but, the maps do not contain references to 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Without regular classroom practice, it is not certain that all students are gaining access to 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and teachers are consistently implementing standards and expectations. (curriculum maps, self-study, teachers, classroom work, classroom observations)

The curriculum often emphasizes increasing understanding and application of knowledge through problem-solving, inquiry, and the informed use of technology. The curriculum includes some opportunities for authentic learning and the practice of higher order thinking. Only through informal teacher-initiated design does the curriculum emphasize depth of understanding through cross-disciplinary learning, however. Student work and classroom observations illustrate the frequent use of problem-solving skills and authentic opportunities for learning both in and out of school, but there are fewer opportunities for students to demonstrate higher order thinking and cross-disciplinary learning. In order to address this concern, some members of the faculty are organized into Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) that meet every other day, and some of these groups are charged with making curricular changes. The Inquiry-Based Biology Lessons committee is designing additional opportunities for inquiry-based learning in high school science classrooms. A professional learning community devoted to data analysis is also determining changes that need to be made within classrooms to improve high order thinking skills. Multiple examples of problem-solving by students were observed in a variety of classrooms, from solving equations in math and AP

Physics to reviewing a short story in AP English. Student work in art also demonstrates problem-solving and authentic learning opportunities. Written curriculum documents show opportunities for higher-order thinking, but few actual examples were observed either in the classroom or in student work. There is very little formal cross-disciplinary curriculum. However, foreign language teachers have collaborated with the art teacher to allow Spanish language learners to explore the history of Spanish-speaking artists. Art students were also required to utilize basic geometry skills to create three-dimensional art pieces. Although courses do overlap at times, there is very little evidence of intentional interdisciplinary lesson planning and curriculum documentation. There was no evidence of pre-planned cross-disciplinary learning in classes observed during classroom visits. Many students demonstrate an informed and ethical use of technology. Students receive an "Internet Acceptable Use Policy" and are required to sign an "Internet Policy Contract" in order to receive a network username and password. Many students receive training in the ethical use of technology in either Media Literacy or in a number of English and history classes. However, the latter is based on teacher initiative; the curriculum is not designed so that all students receive this training. There are authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school. In an Algebra II class, for example, students are required to solve a problem by calculating when two planes would crash into each other. The South Shore Collaborative also runs the school store after school. Other pieces of student work demonstrate problem-solving and authentic learning opportunities such as the purposeful writing of college essays and the AP English teacher requiring students to do research in college libraries. Outside of the traditional classroom, programs such as Project Humanitarian Involvement (PHI) and Mock Trial Team give students the opportunity not only to apply what they learn in the classroom, but also a chance to practice social skills beyond the school walls. PHI is an extra-curricular group with the goal to educate

people about and help eradicate social and political injustice. The varied activities undertaken by this group include raising money and increasing awareness of the needs of the victims of the earthquake in Haiti and journeying to El Salvador to build houses with Habitat for Humanity. The HHS Mock Trial Team prepares students to participate in the Massachusetts Mock Trial Tournament. While involved in this program, students apply their 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills in an authentic setting. The HHS curriculum emphasizes use of problem-solving skills, technology, and opportunities for authentic learning, allowing students to meet some 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. However, the written curriculum does not always make use of higher order thinking skills and cross-disciplinary learning, limiting student learning and development. (teacher interviews, self-study, student work, classroom observations, curriculum documents)

There is not a clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum at Hull High School. With no formal building-level structure in place to oversee curriculum development, revision, and implementation, there is no clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum. There are neither formal conditions nor monitoring in place to ensure that the written curriculum is being taught. There are written curriculum documents in the form of curriculum maps which, by their very nature, are designed to reflect what is actually taught in the classroom rather than to anticipate what should be taught. And in addition, not every course that is taught at Hull High School has a corresponding curriculum map, and most curriculum maps were written in 2008-2009. Not every teacher regularly uses curriculum maps to guide the taught curriculum. One teacher reports that he/she had to consult informally with other teachers about unit pacing and materials rather than use curriculum documents for that purpose. Teachers report that teacher evaluation procedures, for example, do not include

formal discussion or reflection on the alignment between written and taught curriculum. The teacher evaluation tool outlined in the Hull Teachers Association contract does not explicitly reference review of taught curriculum related to written curriculum. There appears to be no documented way to ensure that the written curriculum is being taught. Classroom observations show that there is no evidence written curriculum necessarily corresponds to the taught curriculum. As stated in the self-study, there is limited time for teachers to collaborate so some teachers who teach the same course and use the same curriculum map actually teach different material. Although there is no formal curriculum development at present, the school's two-year plan describes this as a priority. Thus, the limited alignment between written and taught curriculum restricts student access to the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (classroom observations, self-study, teachers, central office personnel, school leadership, two-year plan)

There is a limited curricular coordination and vertical articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district. Faculty members express their desire for such articulation so they can better inform their curriculum and instruction. The director of curriculum, instruction and professional development states that these vertical articulation meetings are happening K-8 and will take place between the middle and high schools in the 2012-2013 school year. The special education and guidance departments (specifically the TIDES and Team-Based Learning programs) report continuous and effective informal curricular coordination between sending schools and the high school programs. In other areas, there has been no structure in place to allow for effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation between and among all academic areas and with sending schools in the district. Although there are K-8 curriculum documents, the high school teachers have not had ready access to middle school curriculum documents, and members of the

curriculum study team report no knowledge of curriculum from any sending schools.

Approximately four years ago, teachers from the middle and high school met by department during one professional development day to discuss vertical articulation of the curriculum. Since that time, however, no additional collaboration had taken place until the summer of 2011 when an official, district-wide committee convened to revise the Hull Pre-K to 12 ELA curricula in light of the Common Core State Standards. This committee plans to continue meeting throughout this year although no subsequent meetings have taken place. As well, an additional group plans to begin Pre-K to 12 math curriculum revision this school year. These two initiatives are intended to be the start of a four-year curriculum renewal process that will allow for the revision, implementation, and evaluation of all curricular areas between 2010 and 2014. This plan is currently in draft form. With the exception of English and some math teachers, some faculty members are not aware of these longer-range curriculum revision plans, however. In addition, there is limited alignment within the school. PLCs, new to the high school this year, do provide some opportunity for teachers to collaborate on curricular issues within departments, but these initiatives depend on the focus of the particular PLC. For example, the MCAS math data analysis PLC meets to adapt math curricula to better meet the standards of the MCAS test. However, this analysis does not yet directly influence instruction. There is no current formal vertical alignment with sending schools despite recent effort to develop a formal curriculum review cycle. Coordination within the HHS academic areas is also limited due, in part, to time constraints on professional development. These deficiencies in time and alignment make it difficult to ensure that all students are meeting 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations in each course throughout their progress at HHS and prevent teachers from building upon lessons and coordinating a curriculum that consistently meets 21<sup>st</sup> century expectations.

(superintendent, teachers, self-study, central office personnel, school leadership)

Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are minimally sufficient to implement the curriculum and other learning opportunities. Funding for co-curricular activities is limited and unstable. Individual teachers have an average class size of twenty-two, and class sizes range from as few as six students to as many as twenty-four students. In general, teachers and students report that current class sizes allow for the implementation of the curriculum identified for classes currently being taught. In the 2011-2012 school year, there was an additional teaching position added to begin the team-based learning program within the department of special education. However, on the Endicott Survey, only 30% of the staff indicated that there is sufficient staff to implement the curriculum. French, industrial arts (including CAD), and business classes were eliminated several years ago. French courses are now available to students through the newly implemented Middlebury College Online World languages program. The hands-on nature of the industrial arts program cannot be replicated through VHS courses, and this program has been identified by a number of constituencies, including the building principal, as needing to be reinstated. Parents, students, and some faculty members, including the principal, believe there may be a link between the lack of shop and engineering technology courses and the dropout rate. In the survey, only 19% of faculty members stated that there are sufficient instructional materials to implement the curriculum. Teachers report that there are multiple areas where additional instructional materials are needed. Line items outlining the expenses in instructional materials in areas such as art and general supplies have decreased between FY 09 and FY 11, yet expenses in instructional supplies in some areas such as science have actually increased—following earlier decreases—during the same time period. Overall, the most basic needs for instructional materials are being met. Teachers, students, and administrators have all identified

improving the availability of technology throughout the building as an on-going need. Over the past 18 months, each content area has seen the installation of at least one SMART Board. In addition, a new computer-based language-lab has been created and is now available for use by all Spanish classes. There are two computer labs as well as over 20 new computers with Internet access in the library-media center. However, class access to these resources is sometimes limited due to overbooking. Lack of support services for technology problems has been reported to hinder the effective delivery of the curriculum. Most importantly, the faculty recognizes the need to ensure that technology continues to remain up-to-date through the ongoing review and replacement of equipment. The library/media center has approximately 10,000 volumes, many of which are reported by the librarian to be outdated. Those on-line resources that are available are provided free from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. Teachers report that the library-media offerings are acceptable, in general, for the needs of the courses they are currently teaching. The science department reports a need to have additional access to current scientific publications, however. The facilities at Hull High School were updated in 2005 so that the science labs are up to date. There are two art rooms to provide for the art curriculum. The gymnasium and workout room are sufficient to support the health and wellness curricula. Although both teachers and students have expressed concern about temperature fluctuations throughout the building, temperature does not appear to impact delivery of the curriculum. In recent years, most funding for co-curricular activities has been raised by parent and community-based organizations. Funding sources for FY11 and FY12 restored \$40,000 in athletics and \$20,000 in drama, but there is no budgetary support for the future so programs must rely on parent and community support. The lack of consistent, guaranteed financial support for these and other extra-curricular programs leaves the future of these programs unstable. Equipment, technology, and supplies are currently sufficient to

support the curriculum, but the current funding structure for co-curricular activities is not predictable enough to guarantee that they will continue to be an important mechanism by which students practice and achieve the school's learning expectations. (parents, school leadership, self-study, teachers, Hull High School expenses, Endicott Survey)

Until recently, the district has not provided 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. The director of curriculum, instruction, and professional development is in charge of curriculum coordination and articulation in the district assisted by the district's principals and assistant principals. Some teachers report collaborating informally on the development of new lessons. However, the majority of teachers has stated that the lack of time specifically dedicated to curriculum development and revision has impaired teachers' ability to do either of these effectively. Only 47% of teachers states that they have sufficient time to engage in formal curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work. However, a four-year curriculum renewal process that will allow for the revision, implementation, and evaluation of all curricular areas between 2010 and 2014 is in the planning stages. Although this plan is currently in draft form, a curriculum institute aligning the K-12 ELA curriculum with the Common Core took place last summer with representation from the high school English department. An additional curriculum institute aligning the K-12 math curriculum with the Common Core is anticipated to begin this fall. Following that, the draft of this four-year curriculum renewal process will allow the revision of each content area in turn over a period of four years. PLCs appear to provide additional opportunities for teachers to collaborate on curricular issues within departments. These initiatives depend on the focus of the particular PLC. For example, all but one member of the

English department is currently involved in analyzing ELA MCAS data. Teachers in this PLC state that they will be able to use this analysis to make meaningful changes in their curriculum. Unfortunately, because of scheduling, the PLC exploring the development of inquiry-based projects for use in science classes involves only a small percentage of the science department members. Lack of appropriate time and resources provided to review and revise the curriculum does not ensure that all students are given the opportunity to meet all of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (self-study, central office personnel, teachers, school leadership, superintendent, Endicott Survey, two-year plan, five-year plan)

### **Commendations**

1. The emphasis on problem-solving throughout the majority of courses in the curriculum
2. Innovative extracurricular opportunities such as PHI and HHS Mock Trial that allow students to develop and use 21<sup>st</sup> century leaning skills outside the classroom
3. PLC's that have been effective for professional development and collaboration
4. The draft plan for curriculum renewal
5. The beautifully renovated facility that supports the delivery of a 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum

### **Recommendations**

1. Expand curriculum documents to include details of specific instructional methods and assessment practices.
2. Revise curriculum documents to align with the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and school-wide rubrics
3. Increase collaboration among teachers through common planning time
4. Align written and taught curriculum and ensure that 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations are implemented
5. Increase curricular coordination and articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools

**3****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 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations by:
  - personalizing instruction
  - engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning
  - engaging students as active and self-directed learners
  - emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking
  - applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks
  - engaging students in self-assessment and reflection
  - integrating technology.
3. Teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by:
  - using formative assessment, especially during instructional time
  - strategically differentiating
  - purposefully organizing group learning activities
  - providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom.
4. Teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by:
  - using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments
  - examining student work
  - using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents
  - examining current research

## Conclusions

Teachers' instructional practices are periodically examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. Although there is some examination of instructional practices, currently, there is no formal process for examining the consistency between instructional practices and the school's core values and expectations for learning. Teachers in physical education and wellness support the core belief of life-long learning through promoting strong habits around health and fitness. The media literacy course instills awareness of the various purposes of media messages and their responsible use. Creativity is evident in English courses when students illustrate descriptive character traits based on the text. Teachers report that, at times, instructional practices are in line with 21st century learning expectations, but this is not common practice in all lessons and across all disciplines. School leadership has acknowledged that consistency of instructional practices with the beliefs about learning has yet to be formalized. Steering Committee members also acknowledged that their instructional practices should be aligned with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, but more time is needed to properly implement the process. When teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, instructional objectives systematically drive instructional practices that reflect the core mission of the school. (self-study, teacher interviews, school leadership, steering committee meeting)

The instructional practices, in some respects, support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. The majority of teachers at Hull High School personalize instruction to support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Students have a voice in topic assignments, meeting the needs of student accommodations as set forth by 504 and IEP standards, in wellness and art classes in which student projects are self-directed and individualized based on ability and need, and in student grouping. Little cross-disciplinary learning takes place on a consistent basis. Teachers actively engage students in the learning process and create opportunities for self-directed learning. Independent research projects are common in curriculum areas such as English, social studies, art and wellness. In several classes, students have the opportunity to work cooperatively. Classes such as art, music, and wellness create a natural opportunity for self-directed student participation. Many teachers emphasize inquiry, problem-solving, and some higher order thinking in their classroom instruction, particularly in honors and advanced placement courses. For example, in a freshman physics class, the teacher used real-life examples to assist in explaining the concept of motion. Most teachers have students apply knowledge and skill to authentic tasks that include student internships which provide authentic experiences for students in a non-classroom setting. In a math class, students engage in real-world problem-solving, considering intersections of lines and how this might affect the job of air traffic controllers. Students in music classes are routinely asked to be creative, and they produce real music in the piano labs and recording labs. In wellness classes, students are asked to implement an individual wellness plan. The majority of teachers engages students in self-assessment and reflection. Teachers regularly ask students to assess their own work, but much of this is done through informal conversation, and the use of formal student self-assessment is infrequent. On the whole, teachers are making progress with integrating technology in to some degree into their instruction. The school has recently purchased seven SMART Boards that have increased the level of student engagement. Newly purchased iPads and Kurzweil Readers have further helped to enhance instruction in the special education department. Foreign language teachers

use one dedicated lab on a regular basis. Nevertheless, the technology provided is not sufficient for all stakeholders. According to the Endicott Survey, 56.4% of the student population reports that they are asked to use technology within their assignments and 29 out of 30 teachers reports integrating technology into instruction. Teachers have been resourceful in providing access to technology. For example, in an English class, the teacher has allowed students to use their personal devices to access content-related information on the Internet. When teachers apply consistent and daily instructional practices that support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations, students will be better prepared for post-secondary success. (students, teachers, school leadership, self-study, student work samples)

The majority of teachers at Hull High School regularly adjusts instructional practices to meet individual student needs. A majority of classes use formative assessments regularly. As well, the self-study also reports that teachers use formative assessment to drive lesson-planning. Students report that teachers frequently check for understanding in classes. In a math class, students are instructed to share their work steps with a partner, and the use of exit tickets is observed in several classes across various disciplines. However, teachers do not strategically differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of students. The district has supported professional development in differentiated instruction and is offering a second course this fall for teachers. The grouping observed in several classes appears both random and purposeful, but strategic implementation of student groups is not evident. Teachers regularly provide additional support to students. Teachers voluntarily stay after school to help students. A late bus is available four days a week so that they can stay after school and meet with teachers. Students enthusiastically report that teachers are available to help them when needed. When teachers consistently adjust their instructional practices, students increase their level of

understanding in the subject area, and teachers will have a greater opportunity to refine their practices. (self-study, panel presentation, teacher interviews, central office personnel, classroom observation)

Teachers individually strive to improve their instructional practices, and some teachers work collaboratively in this effort. Individual teachers collect their own student achievement data within their own classes, but there is no formal process in place to improve instruction based on review of student achievement data. Teachers individually evaluate student work on a regular basis, however, and this year, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) were created to provide teachers within departments and, in some instances, across disciplines, an opportunity to work on identified problems of practice. Nevertheless, teachers do not have sufficient structured time to meet across disciplines to examine student work. Teachers use feedback from peers and supervisors and, at times, student feedback to change or improve their instructional practices. For example, students in AP English are allowed to choose their own areas of research related to a particular text. Parent feedback is used by only 10% of teachers, according to the Endicott Survey. The administrators regularly do class walk-throughs of classes in session and provide feedback to teachers. Non-professional status teachers are formally observed three times a year, and professional teachers are formally observed every other year. Administrators provide current research to teachers on a variety of topics, such as the Collins Writing Program, Research for Better Teaching, and dropout prevention data, but teachers do not usually take the initiative of doing research using this process. Although school leaders are convinced that the improvement of instruction is critical, there is insufficient time in the schedule for teachers to review current research and best practices formally. When teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by using achievement

data, feedback, and current research, teaching and learning improve, remaining timely and relevant. (teacher interviews, self-study, Endicott Survey, school leadership)

At Hull High School, the majority of teachers maintains expertise in content area and instructional practices, with 99.5% of teachers rated as “highly qualified”. Forty-three percent of teachers reports taking courses, and 77% of teachers reports engaging in professional development to remain current and knowledgeable about instructional practices. There is a variety of ways in which this is achieved. To maintain and improve expertise, teachers report taking college courses, a differentiated instruction workshop that was offered by the district, Virtual High School (VHS) instructional courses, English language learner (ELL) training, wellness workshops, PLC discussions, and various other symposia and conferences. In the teacher contract, 20 hours of professional development time is allocated for teachers to improve and to reflect on instructional practices. Although there is some reflection embedded in these courses, there is no formal structure in place to assess and evaluate the impact of these professional development opportunities on instructional practices. When teachers as adult learners and reflective practitioners maintain expertise in their content area and instructional practices, the quality of instruction stays current and rigor is elevated. (self-study, professional development plans, school leadership, Endicott Survey)

### **Commendations**

1. Teachers who personalize instruction for students
2. The commitment by teachers to engage students in the learning process
3. Use of formative assessment to gauge and adjust instructional practices

4. Use of feedback from peer observations and formal observations to modify instructional practices

### **Recommendations**

1. Implement a formal process for examining the beliefs about learning in order to align instructional practices with them
2. Expand personalizing instruction through real world connections
3. Provide increased time for teachers to develop and document cross-disciplinary learning experiences for students
4. Create a formal system for examining parental feedback to improve instruction
5. Provide teacher training to ensure that all teacher have instructional strategies that will help them to differentiate instruction for their students



## 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

The professional staff is currently developing a uniform formal process based on school-wide analytic rubrics to assess individual student progress and whole-school achievement in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. In 2009-10, the faculty wrote nine school-wide analytic rubrics, which were piloted in the school year 2010-11. Each department adopted one to four of the rubrics to evaluate student progress; however, most teachers have found that the current number of rubrics makes the student evaluation process unmanageable. The faculty is currently in the process of reevaluating the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and rubrics. Some teachers continue to use the original rubrics to assess students in mastery of learning expectations, but not all teachers are using these rubrics uniformly. Some teachers try to use them, but they feel the rubrics do not correspond with what they are assessing. Some teachers are more comfortable using their own course-specific assessment rubrics. Many students do not know the school-wide 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, but remember being given a list of them. A few students report that some of their teachers use the corresponding rubrics on a fairly regular basis. Many students acknowledge that they are given specific project rubrics at the time a project is assigned. There is a plan to write and pilot a reduced number of school-wide rubrics by the end of school year 2011-12. A committee with one teacher from each department has been formed to write the new 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and rubrics. The committee members plan to review their drafts with students and faculty and school committee members and implement the adopted learning expectations in January 2012. The rest of the school year will be used to educate all stakeholders and support teachers as they implement the learning standards. The creation of revised school-wide 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and rubrics and the implementation of a formal process to use

these rubrics will help every student to access and demonstrate the school's 21st century learning expectations. (principal, assistant principal, teachers, superintendent, students, student work, two-year plan)

Without a formal process to measure the 21st century learning expectations, the school's professional staff cannot communicate individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families or the school's progress to the school community. Once the analytic rubrics to measure the individual student learning expectations are completed, the administration will have the professional staff collect evidence and report to stakeholders an individual student progress report at least once a semester, beginning in the 2012-13 school year. The principal describes the school's plan to switch from the current student data management system to a new system with data collection capabilities and standards-based reporting that will facilitate providing this report to students and parents. Currently, the school's professional staff is not able to communicate individual student progress to any stakeholder so that any achievement towards meeting 21st century learning expectations remains undocumented. (principal, assistant principal, self-study, two-year plan)

The professional staff uses multiple methods to collect, disaggregate, and analyze data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. Science, mathematics, English language arts, and special education teachers analyze MCAS data to inform curriculum and instruction. Thus, students are identified for intervention, and MCAS review classes are offered to these students during the school year. Special education teachers analyze MCAS data for students who have failed MCAS to target remediation prior to the retest. Advanced

Placement (AP) teachers analyze AP scores to inform instruction. The school has a waiver system which allows all students entry to honors and advanced placement courses on a space available basis. The principal reports that the AP test results have seen some gain since the onset of the policy. Based on testing results done during the special needs evaluation process, teachers make accommodations and modifications to allow all students access to the curriculum. The administration has developed a list of the identified subjects for investigation and support to improve performance based on the analysis of equity gaps shown in state assessments results; these students are currently grouped as special education students, by gender, as ELL students, and as minority students. The school's drop-out rates, College Board SAT test results, AP exams/test results, and the percentage of students attending 2-year and 4-year colleges are compared with the state average and improvement goals are targeted. Students are referred for support services or further evaluation when identified by teachers as needing support or potentially having a disability. The student assistance team creates a list of students who are receiving failing grades and assigns each of these students to a team member who then develops an action plan. A summer school option is offered to students who have failed a course or lost credit for a course due to extensive absences. The school has established a credit recovery program for students with excessive absences; there is a strategies class that has been created for regular education students needing study skills and organizational support; and there are SAT prep classes provided during the school day for students needing this service. Because Hull's professional staff uses a variety of methods to collect, disaggregate, and analyze data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement, all students can access the full program of studies, bridging achievement gaps in student performance.

(teachers, principal, self-study, classroom observation)

Prior to each unit of study, some teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations, and many teachers communicate related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed. According to the Endicott Survey, 50% of parents, students, and staff members agree that the 21st century learning expectations are being regularly explained in class. Many teachers report that they verbally communicate their learning expectations to students before starting each unit of instruction, but during classroom observations, there were no learning expectations communicated to students. Last year, each department formally adopted the use of one or more of the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations, but, for example, in mathematics, some teachers who are still using their department's learning expectations will reference these when introducing a new unit of study. Students report that most teachers describe what they are expected to know and be able to do prior to each unit of study, but students are not familiar with specific 21st century learning expectations. Many teachers communicate unit-specific learning goals to be assessed prior to each unit of study, but without the systemic implementation of school-wide 21st century learning expectations, there is not a consistently reinforced student understanding of the school's expectations. (teacher interviews, students, classroom observations, student shadowing)

Prior to summative assessments, many teachers provide students with the corresponding rubrics. While the school's 21st century learning expectations rubrics are currently being revised, many teachers are using some form of rubric prior to summative assessments. Some content areas have made greater strides in the use of assessment rubrics than others. For example, science teachers regularly employ their department's lab report rubric. Many

teachers in the mathematics department use the school's current 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectation's problem-solving rubric. Many students report that at the beginning of the school year and prior to summative assessments they have been given rubrics that reflected the course-specific learning goals. According to the Endicott Survey, 71.8% of students indicates they understand the rubrics teachers use to assess their work. Many, but not all, teachers provide students with corresponding rubrics prior to summative assessments. Without full teacher compliance, however, some students are not aware of how they will be assessed and whether they are meeting teacher expectations. (teacher interviews, students, examination of student work, panel presentation, Endicott Survey)

In each unit of study, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments. Teachers utilize a variety of questioning techniques, both verbal and written to check for student learning. There are warm up questions and review of homework in mathematics classes, clicker checks in biology, exit tickets to leave in physics, chemistry, and Spanish classes. A foreign language teacher has ten students write their answers to questions from a worksheet on the board while the rest of the class comments on the accuracy of the answer. In a psychology class, the teacher instructs students to read different parts of a textbook chapter on classical conditioning and answer key questions to share with others in their group, then, later, to take that understanding to the whole class through a jigsaw activity. Prior to that, each student in the class has to state one important piece of learning from their reading. Teachers use exemplars to help students perform well. For example, a wellness teacher hands out an example of a nutrition project that met all criteria and another one that did not. Students report that they are assessed by projects, research, writing, lab reports, traditional quizzes and

tests, performance tasks, art portfolios and products, and behavioral charts. Teachers add to that list with open-response prompts, presentations, responses to primary source material, and short essays. Students present their authentic assessments on a regular basis and are assessed in this 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations as well. According to the Endicott Survey, 76.7% of the faculty members agreed that teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments. In the survey, 73.5% of students and 68.4% of parents were in agreement. The majority of teachers has incorporated the types of assessment in their syllabi and course expectations. Student learning is positively impacted by teachers employing a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments, in each unit of study. (Endicott Survey, teachers, students, classroom observations)

Teachers do not collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments. While many teachers do collaborate informally and at unstructured times to create, analyze, and revise a variety of assessments, there is no common planning time built into the schedule for teachers to collaborate with one another. Most departments have five or fewer teachers, and thus, frequently, individual teachers are the only teachers of some courses. Teachers do not have regularly scheduled department meetings. Beginning with the 2011-12 school year, however, some teaching assignments have been revised and, instead of one teacher teaching four English 9 classes, now two teachers each teach two English 9 classes. This change has allowed some collaboration between the teachers who are teaching the same class, but this collaboration is reported to be in its infancy, and there are no common assessments at present. The school administration has implemented Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) where teachers

come together every other day and collaborate on such subjects as data analysis of the MCAS test results, designing inquiry-based biology lessons, and revising the pacing of foreign language curriculum. Freshmen mathematics teachers, however, do share midterm and final assessments, and wellness teachers share assessments; the history department uses a common assessment for a research paper; and teachers who have previously taught a course do share assessments with the next teacher. Although not all teachers have formal common planning time, because of the small size of the school, teachers report they are able to collaborate with other teachers when possible after school or during lunch periods. Currently, the biology teachers are able to collaborate at common lunch times, and school administrators report they hope to implement common planning time for more teachers in the future. The implementation of increasing time for all staff members to collaborate would allow regular formal opportunities for professional staff members to create, analyze, and revise formative and summative assessments, including common assessments, to improve student learning. (teacher interviews, school leadership committee, panel presentation)

While many teachers provide immediate feedback in class on concepts covered, only some teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback on most student work to ensure that students revise and improve their work. In the classrooms, teachers give immediate feedback on concepts covered as they walk through the classroom and check student work, have students go to the board, use individual whiteboards to see student responses, use exit tickets, and use clickers with the Promethean boards. Some written samples of student work show specific, corrective feedback from teachers. For example, in one geometry class, work reveals many comments about what students should have included to meet or exceed the project criteria. The

foreign language lab also allows for immediate and corrective feedback before formal assessments. Students report that they can take re-tests and re-do projects to demonstrate improved learning in some of their classes. A Spanish teacher allows research assignments to be revised and rewritten after he provides corrections, thought-provoking questions, and areas of concern. However, there are many examples of graded student work such as math and English quizzes and tests that do not include corrective feedback or comments. Problems, including open-response questions, are sometimes marked right or wrong only. Only 66.8% of the students who responded to the Endicott Survey felt that their teachers assessed and returned their work in a reasonable amount of time; 72.5% felt their teachers offer suggestions to help them improve their schoolwork; and 60.7% believed their teachers' grading is fair and consistent. Math teachers use assessment data from items such as chapter tests to re-teach content to a class before moving on to a new unit of study. When teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback, students have the opportunity to revise and improve their work while it is fresh, and students are better able to achieve the expected learning goals of their course. (Endicott Survey, teachers, students, sample work)

Teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning. In many classes, students are given short quizzes to determine the student's level of understanding. In rooms equipped with SMART Boards, students will use clickers to answer multiple choice questions, giving the teachers instant feedback on the levels of student understanding and allowing the teacher to immediately adapt the instruction to improve student learning. Teachers are continually assessing students by walking around the room, observing students, facilitating class discussions, and administering

quizzes as well as unit tests. The information gathered from these assessments is analyzed and reviewed. Teachers across the curriculum report they consistently use formative assessments to adapt their instructional practices for the purposes of improving student learning immediately. Teachers report lessons are reviewed and modified depending on the results of the assessments. In 2011-12, school administrators implemented PLCs where teachers come together during every other day and collaborate on discussions of instruction and assessment and such details as inquiry-based biology lessons. In mathematics classes, students are asked to work out equations on the board, and the teacher is able to see where the students are demonstrating strengths and weaknesses in understanding. Because of a lack of common planning time, teachers cannot collaborate on a regular basis for the express purpose of using formative assessments to determine appropriate, necessary changes in instructional practices. (teacher interviews, panel presentation, classroom observations, student shadowing)

While many teachers examine their own students' work for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, there are very few formal opportunities at Hull High School for teachers and administrators to meet in a collaborative setting to examine student work, common course and common grade-level assessments, standardized assessments data from sending schools, and post-secondary institutions, and survey data from current students and alumni. As a result of budget cuts, teachers do not have common departmental time nor do they have department heads, curriculum coordinators, or lead teachers. The principal has described a hope to provide grades 6-12 curriculum coordinators as funding becomes available within the next two years. The school has achieved the implementation of PLCs where there is discussion of MCAS data by English, special needs, mathematics, and science teachers to make

curricular and instructional changes to improve student achievement for the next school year. Faculty meetings have been used to examine MCAS data collaboratively, and school-wide data and trends in student performance were examined. AP teachers use exam results to inform their instruction for the next school year. Spanish and wellness teachers provided examples of revised authentic assessments and instructional practices based on review of previous projects. Although there are some common course assessments, such as those in mathematics, the work of students is not usually shared, nor is there any impact on curriculum or instruction as a result of the data. Teachers who use rubrics do inform their students prior to giving the assessment. Special education and classroom teachers collaborate on their students' work and do make accommodations and modifications as needed. Vertical articulation between schools allowing exchange of data has recently begun. Faculty members express their desire for additional articulation so they can better inform their curriculum and instruction. There are plans to extend the vertical articulation meetings that are currently taking place K-8 to begin between the middle and high schools in the 2012-2013 school year. Individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations cannot be examined until the standards and rubrics are finalized. When teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, students will experience a rich and rigorous curriculum and improved learning. (teachers, director of curriculum, instruction, and professional development, students)

Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. The grading and reporting practices are

reviewed each year, discussed before the entire faculty, and presented for approval and adoption by the school committee. Beginning with the school year 2010-11, the school changed the passing grade from a 65-69 to a range of 60-69. These changes were made so the school would be more in line with other schools in the area and in Massachusetts. The grading and reporting practices are included in the student handbook. Common assessments are used by some departments and subjects but are not consistent across all disciplines. Some, but not all, teachers are continuing to use the school-wide 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations and are using these rubrics as a grading tool, but some teachers using the rubrics as a grading tool appear to be doing so randomly without explanation to the student of why the student did not meet the expectations. There is no balanced use by all teachers of formative assessments, summative assessments, and common assessments. Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised, but without common planning time and common assessments, grading practices cannot be consistent across curricular areas. (Endicott Survey, self-study, school leadership committee, teacher interviews, student work)

### **Commendations**

1. The communication to students of unit-specific learning goals by most teachers
2. Student awareness and recognition of the criteria (rubrics) by which work will be measured on summative assessments
3. The development of professional learning communities (PLC) to allow formal teacher collaboration on assessment and its data
4. Regular use of a variety of formative and summative assessments by many teachers to inform their instruction

## **Recommendations**

1. Create and implement a formal process to use school-wide and course-specific rubrics with all students to assess individual student and whole-school achievement of learning expectations
2. Provide time for regular collaboration on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments that reflect the school's core values, beliefs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
3. Provide students with specific and corrective feedback on all written assessments
4. Review and revise grading practices in order to develop consistent grading practices across curricular areas

**COMMISSION ON  
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**SUPPORT OF  
TEACHING AND LEARNING 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 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
4. In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff:
  - engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning
  - use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices
  - dedicate formal time to implement professional development
  - apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
5. School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning.
6. The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.
7. Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students.
8. The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.
9. Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.

10. Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning.
11. The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
12. The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school.

## Conclusions

The school community, with few exceptions, 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. Student/parent and teacher handbooks reflect a high expectation for students and communicate this through clearly marked sections, with the school mission statement, core values, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations for learning strategically placed at the beginning of the document. This establishes the importance of these values in the school's academic vision as stated by the principal in formal panels. Discipline and attendance policies clearly illustrate the focus on students taking responsibility for their own learning. Along with stated consequences for lack of attendance, students are aware that they have the ability to earn back credits lost due to absence through approved credit recovery systems, and this helps to foster a sense of support for such efforts. Teaching staff members note that, as major issues arise in the school, such as faculty or student bereavement or crisis events, these are dealt with effectively by the principal's communication both to the staff through faculty meetings and to students by staff members as soon as possible. These announcements are repeated through the day and are accompanied by information on the availability of counseling options for the student body. The students feel that their emotional well-being is being taken into account.

Over the last two years, aggressive behavior has been reduced while minor disruptive behavior appears to have increased. The school has initiated programs and activities aimed at increasing tolerance and raising awareness for diversity, but there is still insufficient connection among staff members, parents, and the student body. Parents are aware that diversity and awareness are important issues addressed in the school. The student body has actively engaged

in resolution of these tensions. For example, Talking Accepting Listening Knowing (T.A.L.K.) aims to raise awareness of a broad range of issues from race and culture to sexual orientation. There is a wide range of evidence of school pride, however. Clubs and programs include, but are not limited, to the HHS Ultimate Fans, booster support of the athletic program, student council, class officers, student recycling program, student advisory, class officers, the HHS Leadership Program, and T.A.L.K. Also of note are student trips to El Salvador to build homes for those in need. Conversations with students show that they are aware of the high expectations of Hull High School for their academic progress. Students understand and can apply the core values of the school as set out in CIRCLS, and they appear to take pride in their work for the local community carried out at the beginning of the school year, such as landscaping local senior residences. Because of the school's safe, positive, and respectful learning community, effective teaching and learning can take place. (student handbook, staff crisis handbook, Discipline Statistical Reports, parents and students)

Hull High School offers a selection of heterogeneous classes in different curriculum areas that allow a student's education to be equitable and inclusive; however, it is feasible that any particular student might have limited experience in heterogeneous classes. The program of studies shows that each grade 9 student is enrolled in two heterogeneously-grouped courses in the core areas of English language arts and mathematics: Freshman Writing and Freshman Mathematics. Students are also grouped heterogeneously in Economics and Government core courses. Aside from these courses, students are tracked from grade nine through twelve in the core curriculum areas of mathematics, history, English language arts and the remaining social studies courses (US History I/II and World History). Spanish courses are heterogeneous in that, although there are honors and college preparatory level classes, the honors level classes are

open to all students. Spanish is not a graduation requirement, however, so there is a chance student may not enroll in Spanish. The school has implemented a waiver program for students who wish to take AP and honors level courses but do not meet the prerequisites. Teachers and students alike report that many students have taken advantage of this waiver policy. As classes become more heterogeneously grouped, there is an opportunity for a more equitable learning experience for all students. (self-study, students, school leadership, program of studies, five-year plan)

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. For the past five years students have met weekly with faculty or staff members over their four-year journey through high school. During this time, students also experience dedicated school-wide or grade-wide meetings for the purposes of building community, providing relevant programs, and disseminating information pertinent to students' lives. Students report mixed opinions about their advisory classes. Many students view the school-wide and grade-wide assemblies as avenues that are positive. However, in the Endicott Survey students say they feel there is a discrepancy in how advisory classes are carried out. Students report that they would prefer to have more information provided to them about college, scholarships, and the process of application. Student advisory class is regarded as the primary resource by students to meet their emotional needs. The mentor, however, is not classed as the student's advocate for calling parents or facilitating the learning plan of the student. This is seen as the job of the guidance counselor. Student interviews reveal that it is not clear that parents are contacted regularly, rather only when issues arise. Faculty members regularly meet students outside of the academic

environment. All faculty members endeavor to attend school rallies, athletic games and events, and theatre productions. Students report that the interaction at these events greatly increases the connection students feel to faculty members. The school has clear planning for the social and emotional well-being of its student body. Because all students have the opportunity to have a close, formal relationship with a member of the faculty or staff, this helps to foster a close feeling of support. (student panels, teacher panels, student shadowing, Endicott Survey)

In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff members engage in professional discourse, use resources outside of the school, and dedicate formal time to implement professional development. These activities, however, do not clearly demonstrate that these skills, practices, and ideas are used to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The principal and professional staff members at Hull High School have made positive strides toward improving student learning. The self-study reports that professional discourse is encouraged at regular staff meetings. A very collaborative spirit is evident in the forming of PLC groups. The principal provides the example of the PLC working on drop-out prevention and the PLC for MCAS math data analysis that have eagerly sought to report their findings to the rest of the school's professional staff. Teachers are required to observe peers for up to four hours of their professional development. Teachers have used professional development time in and out of school hours to train in the John Collins Writing Program, to identify exemplars in writing from student work, to train in differentiated instruction, and to learn about topics in special education. Less than half of the staff, however, feels that the school's professional development program enables teachers to apply skills to improve instruction and assessment, but almost 75% of the staff feels that input from supervisors plays an important role in improving instructional practices. There is a school plan

to devise and implement the use of school-wide rubrics to ensure consistent expectations and grading of all students. Teachers do not engage in discussion of professional readings and research although there is access to research through the library's databases. Teachers do not visit other schools to observe programs of interest although several teachers have attended off-site conferences and programs which could enhance their teaching strategies in their content area. Teachers have also begun the ELL category trainings. As a result of varied use of professional development time, teachers' instructional skills are improving over time to meet the needs of the students in the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (Endicott Survey, self-study committee, school leadership, central office personnel)

School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning. The supervision and evaluation process has been designed to support faculty members regularly throughout the year by helping to shape their instructional practices. Teachers receive both formative and summative feedback supported by frequent administrative walkthroughs that have been welcomed by the faculty. Formal evaluation aims to highlight major instructional best practice changes. Walkthroughs aim to provide small corrections for better practice over the course of the year and ensure that such practices are accurate and consistent. Examples of classroom instructional improvement include, but are not limited to, improved use of differentiated instruction and anchor tasks. High school administrators have attended a variety of professional development courses in 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. Courses attended include presentations by the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (M.A.S.S.), the Accept Education Collaborative, the Massachusetts Secondary School Administration Association (MSSAA), Fitchburg State College, and the Norwell Public Schools. The principal has attended the MSSAA courses including the Summer Institute and

Legal Issues Committee, a workshop on Common Core Standards, a course on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Inclusive Practices That Work, and professional development at Norwell High School on Building a Community of Learners. The principal and assistant principal have attended a course at Fitchburg State on Observing and Analyzing Teaching, taught by senior educators with an extensive background in teaching and leadership. It assists schools in developing teacher evaluation systems, improves the overall quality of teaching, and delivers in-depth training and certification of evaluators on the necessary skills for effective evaluation. Because formal evaluation takes place regularly and is supported by walkthroughs and continuous training in best evaluation practices, classroom instruction continuous to evolve to best serve the individual needs of the student. (self-study, students, teachers, principal)

The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students. The Hull High School staff has organized the schedule in a way that supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration, and the learning needs of all students. There have been recent changes made to the master schedule to facilitate PLC time very other school day. The school schedules two full days and four early release half days of professional development time in addition to the twenty hours of contractual professional development time scheduled for the faculty. Topics of this professional development time vary and include special education, Executive Function Skills, Best Practices for Struggling Readers, Effective Teaching, and MCAS Open Response. Currently only AP Environmental Science and AP Biology offer expanded blocks for lab work. In PLC groups, teachers identify “Problems of Practice” they wish to address in their PLCs. Depending on the topic, groupings may be cross- or intra-curricular. The music department meets in a district-wide vertical team with the elementary, middle, and high school music teachers. Biology

teachers and foreign language teachers meet in subject specific groups to design inquiry-based lessons and curriculum pacing, respectively. The school offers Virtual High School courses to students to allow for schedule flexibility. A Dropout Prevention PLC has been formed to address alternative pathways to graduation. The design of the master schedule ensures that all faculty members participate in topics that have a positive impact on teaching and learning. (central office, school leadership, self-study, teachers)

Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. However, as a result of budget constraints, vocational courses, the business department, and staff positions such as lead teachers have been cut. Teachers believe that typical class sizes across both core and elective studies are adequate in meeting the needs of individual learners in the class. However, in classes with lower student numbers, effective differentiation of tasks was not always apparent, leading to student disengagement with the learning experience. Class size in most subjects averages approximately 22 students. If individual students are still struggling in spite of all efforts, the student can be referred to the student assistance team or placed in a Strategies Class to help them back on track. Students and parents report that all faculty members willingly stay after the school day for students who require extra academic aid. Adequate class sizes ensure that there can be more effective teaching and learning. This allows for individualized learning, ensuring that all students make progress towards the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (classroom observations, students, teachers, parents)

The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. In the Endicott Survey, nearly 80 percent of students who responded agreed that the principal is clear about what he

wants the school to accomplish for all of the students; in the same survey, 86% of faculty members responded that the principal and other school-based administrators provide instructional leadership that is consistent with the school's core values and beliefs and learning expectations. Administrators perform walkthroughs, and faculty members observe that clearer objectives would benefit faculty members. An open forum format at staff meetings allows faculty input into the principal's decisions. The principal's time is spent on all aspects of the school's operation. The principal deals with management, scheduling, professional development, budget issues, and observation of teaching. In common areas of the school, there are many examples of student work highlighted. The implementation of the waiver policy for AP courses and the loosening of the sports eligibility policy indicate that the principal's decisions support the learning of every student by actively working to keep every student engaged. Students report that the school has a program to reward the sports team with the highest grade average by hanging a banner for the team in the gymnasium. The students also report that they have a clear understanding of the school's core values and beliefs because they are posted throughout the building and the mission statement is included in the morning announcements. The mission statement was the result of a community effort in writing. The TIDES program was revised with input from the principal, TIDES director, and the director of student support services. The advisory program was revised as a result of student and teacher feedback. Collaboration between the principal and other school leaders, including teachers, allows for instructional leadership that uniformly models the school's core values and beliefs about learning, allowing all students to have excellent learning opportunities. (students, Endicott Survey, teachers, central office personnel, school administrators, self-study)

Teachers, students, and parents have many avenues to be involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership. The principal has modeled openness in his decision-making when students and parents approached the principal requesting that pictures published in the senior portrait section of the yearbook could be taken by photographers other than the school photographer. The principal subsequently altered the school policy to better reflect this. However, freshman and sophomore students interviewed outside the student panel are not sure of the protocols enabling them to make their views known to the principal. There are many official channels for student input into both the policy and vision of the school. Students can be elected to student council, meeting once a week, and the number of places per grade available on this council has increased from four to five in the 2010/2011 year. This is supported by class officers who represent their grade and are elected democratically by their peers and the student advisory board, consisting of members from the student council, whose job it is to manage money entrusted to them by past Hull graduates. While class officer elections have been observed to be based to a great extent upon popularity, the highest position of student body president who is responsible as the liaison between the student body and the administration is currently recognized as being elected for ability and community service. Parents feel that there are many opportunities for their voices to be heard. There are opportunities for adults to sit on the parent teacher organization and other specific organizations, such as HHS Boosters and the HHS Drama Parents. The school reaches out to parents in a wide variety of ways. When the school is planning major policy changes, the school calls all parents to inform them of upcoming forums, and the school includes all general information to parents using traditional methods such as the community newspaper and local televised channels as well as more modern ones such as Web 3.0 and social media, like Facebook, Twitter, and blogs. However, there is no formal system for information to flow back

to the school through these outreaches as only upper level administrators have access to social media and the responses of parents. All parents feel comfortable contacting individual teachers through personal meetings, phone contact, or email. Parents also feel that teachers give timely and informative responses although only 11 families responded to the recent Endicott Survey, raising questions about the representative nature of that data. Whether it is through surveys, such as the end of the year teacher survey, the budget priorities survey, the mission statement survey or through committees and councils that teachers, students, and parents can be a part of, information is gathered to give the leadership team feedback on existing programs as well as new programs and policies ensuring that all views are represented. (Endicott Survey, teachers, students, parent panel, school leadership panel)

Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning. There is much evidence to indicate that teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the students' engagement in learning. Teachers serve on committees such as the ELA curriculum articulation committee, the school council, the evaluation tool committee, and PLC groups that address dropout prevention, the music curriculum, and the science curriculum. The principal has communicated the expectation that teachers should exercise initiative and leadership through staff meetings and the school improvement plan. The school's blog, parent newsletter, the formation of the PTO, the boosters group, the drama parents group, the advisory program, and the school council provide for teacher decision-making roles. Teacher initiative has brought about programs such as T.A.L.K., which is a club that promotes tolerance and diversity, and Project Humanitarian Involvement, a group that traveled to El Salvador to work with Habitat for Humanity. When there is a high participation level of teachers on school initiatives, a sense of

community can be built between teachers and students leading to school improvement and increased student engagement in learning. (self-study, school administrators, teachers)

The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. There are numerous examples of such collaboration where problems are brought up for group discussion and where new information can be disseminated. There is a distinct push by the leadership of the high school and middle school to ensure that the high 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations are more easily met. Current discussion taking place between principals of the high school and middle school about the vertical transition of students ensures that future students will enter with a transitional skill set allowing them to meet expectations. Both the superintendent and the principal understand and value the many viewpoints of the extended school community and foster an environment where there is a flow of communication. Examples of such collaboration include weekly district leadership team meetings, annual Hull School Committee and District Leadership Team Retreats, monthly Hull Teachers Association Leadership meetings, bi-monthly Hull School Committee meetings, 21<sup>st</sup> century schools proposal meetings and presentations, and the annual joint Hull School Committee and Board of Selectmen meetings. The school board, superintendent, and principal collaborate extensively on the core values and views of the school to ensure that all students have the opportunity to achieve the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (self-study, principal panel, central office panel)

The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. The superintendent observes that the principal is given a great deal of autonomy, to determine such things as the change in the library/media specialist's role,

the formation of the school's core beliefs and values, and the hiring to fill teaching and staff positions. The principal has also made policy changes such as those for course credit and for academic eligibility for sports teams. When the principal has sufficient authority to lead the school, dynamic changes can be implemented in a timely manner that allows the principal to support the students in meeting the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (self-study, school board, superintendent, teachers)

### **Commendations**

1. The many opportunities for students to show pride in themselves and the surrounding community
2. A safe and nurturing school environment
3. Waivers that allow students who wish to challenge themselves academically to take honors courses without course prerequisites
4. Student advisory classes that allow constant contact between students and teachers
5. The senior leadership team's regular evaluations that allow faculty members to continue to improve their instructional practice
6. Class sizes that allow personalized learning experiences and individual education experiences
7. The principal's instructional leadership rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations
8. The school's use of technology in expanding its community outreach
9. The many venues for student voices to be heard at different levels of school policy
10. The school board and superintendent for providing the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school

## **Recommendations**

1. Increase heterogeneous grouping in other core areas
2. Investigate flexibility in the master schedule in order to group PLCs along department lines



## 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 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.*

1. The school has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
2. The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services.
3. Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.
4. School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - deliver a written, developmental program
  - meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling
  - engage in individual and group meetings with all students
  - deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers
  - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.
5. The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - provide preventative health services and direct intervention services
  - use an appropriate referral process
  - conduct ongoing student health assessments
  - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.

6. Library/ media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum
  - provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum
  - ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school
  - are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning
  - conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
  
7. Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
  - collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations
  - provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students
  - perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations.

## Conclusions

Hull High School has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all identified and at-risk students so that each of these students can achieve the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Hull High School has implemented services within the school community to address issues that arise with students. Students in need are identified through the student assistance team (SAT) process, which team includes building administrators, guidance counselors, special educators, adjustment counselors, nurse, and school psychologists. Students are identified, and team members brainstorm success strategies for the individual student during weekly SAT meetings. Such interventions include testing for learning disabilities and referral for special education services, with possible placement in either the TIDES program or a more traditional academic support program. Other interventions include preliminary RTI placements within the TIDES program for students who do need the extra support but have yet to be identified with a specific disability. The student intervention team (SIT), however, is currently experiencing implementation problems because of limited resources available both district and community-wide. Identification and intervention processes afford the school staff members the opportunity to provide support to students who exhibit at-risk behaviors. Such efforts are coordinated through administrators, support staff members, and general education teachers. Funding for additional dropout prevention services is needed to ensure a reduced dropout rate, however. Maintenance of these school-based intervention strategies will continue to strengthen services to all students. (self-study, teacher interviews, school leadership, school support staff, and Endicott Survey)

Hull High School adequately provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services and current events school-wide. The Hull community consists of a small closely-knit group of individuals so that school information is readily available from a variety of sources. The Endicott Study states that 68.4% of parents and 83.7% of the staff agree that student support service information is available and communicated to them in a timely manner. Every five weeks, the school issues progress reports or report cards. Parents also receive the principal's newsletters and attendance letters that include school events and procedures for attendance buy-back options, allowing students to make up time for school absences. Pertinent information is also available through the school website and blog, which are updated on a daily basis. The student handbook, program of studies, guidance information, individual teacher websites, and community information are available via the web. In August of 2011, HHS launched a Facebook page to distribute information to families although information is limited through this resource. The local cable access television studio is located in the high school library, allowing the school to highlight events and information. Hull High School also utilizes the Connect-Ed phone system to disseminate information to families regarding upcoming events and urgent school information. The faculty and staff members use e-mail to send home information to parents and to initiate conversation regarding individual students. Special education teachers are in frequent contact with parents via email and phone, regarding academic, social, and civic student progress updates. Because of Hull High School's commitment to keeping all stakeholders informed, there is a broad base of information available in the community describing teaching and learning benefits. (self-study, teacher interview, students, school leadership, school support staff, school website, school blog, program of studies, student handbook, school Facebook page, Endicott Survey)

The support staff utilizes technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student. The support staff at HHS reports that its members have access to adequate technology to coordinate and support student achievement in relation to the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The guidance staff, including the school psychologists and school adjustment counselor, use student information systems (SIMS) known as Administrators Plus to track student contact information, schedules, grades, and discipline records. The X2 system is planned for implementation in March 2012, which will allow faculty and staff members access to an online system for such items as grades, schedules, discipline, and other features. Guidance counselors also use the Naviance program to gather and analyze data relevant to the college application process, career planning, and to assist in transition planning for special education services. The guidance department also uses the school blog, Facebook account, and e-mail to communicate information to the Hull community about specific students as well as upcoming informational events. The school nurse utilizes the School Nurse Assistance Program Health Center (SNAPS) to record and track every student visit. Each log accesses possible medication information and parent contact information. The librarian utilizes technology in a variety of ways. The media center hosts a full computer lab with 30 updated computers for student use. Students have the opportunity to engage in Virtual High School (VHS) courses as well as foreign language classes offered through Middlebury College. There is room for up to 50 students per year in the VHS course, 25 per semester. The librarian is the site coordinator for both of these offerings. The media center offers web-based data-bases for students to conduct research for their general education classes. The librarian teaches a course in Media Literacy to ensure that students understand the ethics of utilizing web-based information for academic studies and research. Students state that they have access to technology when they need it during school hours as well as before and after school if they have made arrangements.

The special education department has a variety of technological resources available to its members to assist IEP and 504 students access the general education curriculum and meeting the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Assistive technology available to special education students includes: Kurzweil Readers, Alphasmarts, Kindles, Netbooks, iPads, Books-on-Tape, and DVDs. Special education teachers use Semsnet, a program that allows them to track and amend student IEP and 504 information. As well, Hull High School has lifted its ban on use of cell phones during the school day. Students can now use their cell phones in lieu of a printed planner to access the calendar feature to record their homework assignments. They are allowed the last few minutes of their class to enter the information and are allowed to access these during passing time. In addition to the above technology resources that are used by members of the support services, SMART Boards have been installed in at least one classroom in every content area, and training has been provided for the teachers. A foreign language lab has been added to increase the performance of the foreign language students in their respective classes. The school installed 46 security cameras during the 2005-2006 renovations to assist with student safety. Adequate technology resources are available to students at HHS to assist in helping them achieve the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectation, but a long-term sustainable plan for updating and replacing technology is needed in order to maintain effective technology integration. (self-study, teacher interview, school support staff, panel presentation, and students)

The school counseling services department has a limited number of personnel who deliver a written program, meet with students individually and in groups, collaborate with area mental health/social service agencies and disseminate information to the community, and use ongoing assessment data to improve services to ensure student achievement towards the school's 21<sup>st</sup>

century learning expectations. The counseling staff at HHS consists of a full-time guidance counselor, a .6 guidance counselor, a .4 school psychologist, a .2 school psychologist, a .8 student adjustment counselor, a .2 student adjustment counselor, a part-time therapist/social worker, and an on-call behaviorist. The ratio of guidance counselor to students is 1:213.

The counseling staff has developed a timeline in which they disseminate information to students. This timeline includes individual, full class, and small group sessions. The sessions cover a variety of topics from scheduling to graduation and post-graduation plans with all grade levels. Specific topics for individual grades include, but are not limited to, ninth grade transition to high school, tenth grade MCAS testing preparation, eleventh grade college and career preparation, and twelfth grade graduation requirement reviews and post-secondary planning. In addition, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students are afforded the opportunity to attend college/military field trips. This timeline is a written document and is subject to change as needs arise. Depending on grade level, however, students report a different experience to what the timeline illustrates. Ninth graders report that they have met with guidance staff members to discuss transitioning to the high school and class placement. This reflects an improvement with perceptions in the Winter 2010 Endicott Survey where 40.6% and 23.8% of the student body reported that they, respectively, "disagree" or "strongly disagree" with the statement that they meet with their guidance counselor on a regular basis. There is also a disparity between the staff and parent reports of the guidance staff's regularity in meeting with students. Whereas 65.1% of the staff agreed that these meetings took place, only 36.8% of the parents concurred. The school counselors provide families with information regarding access, financing, and transportation for outreach services to area mental health and social service providers on an as-needed basis. Such organizations include, but are not limited to, South Shore Mental Health, South Shore Collaborative, Massachusetts Department of Children and Families, Massachusetts

Department of Mental Health, Hingham District Court, and the Hull Police Department. With signed consent from parents/guardians, information is shared about individual students to assist in intervention strategies for student success. There is currently no system in place for ongoing assessment of counseling services to provide feedback to adhere to the school's 21st century learning expectations. However, in an attempt to collect data to drive current academic practices, the guidance staff did conduct a college admission survey in 2010 and a senior college survey in 2009. The results were used to make changes and improvements to the school-wide academic curriculum so that course offerings were aligned with college acceptance requirements. With consistent and regular access to and revision of the guidance and counseling services, the school community will benefit with an increased graduation rate and more students meeting the school 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. (self-study, teacher interview, students, school support staff, Endicott Survey)

HHS health services have adequate personnel to provide preventative and intervention health services using an appropriate referral process and conducting ongoing student health assessments. HHS has one full-time registered nurse, and the district employs a physician consultant. All students have access to general health services from the school nurse.

Preventative services such as skin check classes within the wellness program and annual flu and meningococcal vaccines are offered. Routine health assessments include vision, hearing, and scoliosis screenings as well as body mass index (BMI) readings. The physician consultant provides physical exams to grade 10 students and students involved in sports programs. The school nurse oversees the management of any student medical issues such as allergies, medications, and various diseases as they become evident within the school community.

Students can be referred to the nurse through the SAT process or by faculty, parents, or self-

referral. If the health issue is beyond the scope of the school's building health service program, then students are referred to either the district physician consultant or to Hull Medical Center for further treatment. Currently, there is no ongoing process to collect assessment data to ensure that each student is achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations where health services are applicable. In an attempt to provide regular revision for the health services program at HHS, an ongoing data collection including community feedback and analysis of such feedback needs to be in place to continually reflect on and improve services. (self-study, teachers, student information letters, school support staff, and school leadership)

There is emergent media integration into curriculum and instructional practices provided by a range of materials and technologies to support school-wide curriculum, ensuring that the library is available for faculty and student use, considering student interests and needs to support independent learning, and using preliminary data and feedback to guide 21st century learning expectations. The 2011-2012 school year brought a positive change to the HHS Library Media Center by redistributing the classroom teacher expectations of the librarian. The librarian is currently responsible to teach one section of Media Literacy to heighten a student's awareness of web-based integrity. The librarian is also the site coordinator for the Virtual High School (VHS) program. The change in the librarian's schedule affords her the opportunity to actively engage in the implementation of the school's curriculum. The librarian offers opportunities for full classes to utilize services in the media center, such as the computer lab, research data-bases, and instructional support with classroom lessons such as history, art, and English.

A varied range of resources is available to support the school's curriculum. Data-bases such as Infotrac, Gale, MA Newspapers, EBSCO, eLibrary, and the Cape Cod Times are

available for research in any academic discipline to support 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. In addition, the media center offers a fully functional computer lab, printers, a television, DVD, scanners, projectors, headsets, magazine subscriptions, and an inter-library loan system to support independent student learning as well as classroom curriculum. The limited budget for the media center raises challenges to fully outfit the facility with current high interest print materials although the librarian has utilized the budget to its fullest extent to keep materials as current as possible. The media center is open from 7:00 a.m. to 2:15 p.m., Monday through Wednesday, and 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Thursday and Friday to provide a staffed facility for student and faculty to research and reinforce academic, social, and civic expectations. More than three-quarters of students agrees on the adequate availability of media center access. They also report that the librarian is a valued resource within the HHS community. They have said that not only does the librarian assist them with academic projects but is also a mentor and trusted adult in the building. More than 65% of students agree that the media center has materials they need in their daily schedules. In the 2009-2010 school year, the former librarian conducted a library survey to obtain student feedback to enhance services of the media center, but only 32 students completed it. There is currently no formal ongoing assessment to collect data and analyze feedback to improve services in the media center. Limited availability of print and digital resources creates a challenge to provide high interest and relevant materials for independent student learning and classroom support, therefore increased financial support will strengthen the media center's support system. (self-study, facility tour, students, teacher interview, school support staff, Endicott Survey)

The support services department for identified students with special needs has limited personnel who collaborate, provide inclusive learning opportunities, and perform ongoing

assessment to ensure that each student achieves the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. Support services are broken down into several areas: guidance, three distinct special education programs, school psychologist, student adjustment counselor, South Shore Collaborative program, an on-call behaviorist, and two paraprofessionals. The guidance staff, school psychologist, and student adjustment counselors participate in the SAT process where they meet with the building leadership team to discuss student needs and possible interventions to assist students in their achievement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The special education teachers collaborate with necessary staff and community resources to create success plans to address the student learning expectations. While there is limited collaboration time built in to the daily schedule, special education teachers distribute copies of student IEPs to all necessary general education teachers and provide weekly progress reports, daily work and behavior updates, make parent phone calls, send e-mails, conduct home visits, and collaborate with community resources.

Hull High School is dedicated to providing challenging inclusive learning opportunities for all students. The creation of a new special education program, the HHS Team-Based Learning program, serves students who would usually be placed in a substantially separate classroom or placed outside of the district offering the opportunity to participate in regular education classes at HHS with increased support for success. Support service faculty and staff members ensure that IEP and 504 students are placed in the least restrictive environments based on the decisions made at TEAM meetings. Through waivers, all students have access to advanced placement classes, even if they have not met the pre-requisites for placement. There is little documentation offered to verify that support service staff members analyze, disseminate, and reflect on assessment data to improve services offered to identified and at-risk students to ensure 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. MCAS, SAT, PSAT, cognitive, behavioral, and

emotional screenings are used to determine if current services offered are effective in producing results that reflect the high expectations as set forth by either the assessment itself or the student's graduation pathway. Information gathered also serves to provide portals to continue research in best practices to further improve services and programs and increase resources in an attempt to address student needs to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. However, with limited intervention resources, it is difficult to provide effective interventions. The SAT team meeting processes to identify at-risk students presents the need to provide full-time support personnel to increase the effectiveness and timeliness of the intervention strategies, including collecting and analyzing data to refine current practices already in place to ensure that all students have opportunities to master 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and to increase the graduation rate. (self-study, student shadowing, teachers, classroom observations, teacher interview)

### **Commendations**

1. Weekly meetings of the SAT team to identify and follow up on at-risk students to provide timely intervention strategies
2. Varied and regular communication with school personnel and general community stakeholders
3. Technology utilization by support staff members to coordinate services and to raise student achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations
4. A fully staffed school health services department to offer preventative, emergency, and on-going services
5. The library media specialist's schedule that allows for school curriculum and community support

## **Recommendations**

1. Create additional pathways to graduation as additional strategies for drop-out prevention
2. Create a management system for drop-out prevention intervention strategies to address drop-out rates
3. Address the discrepancy between parent and staff survey results regarding regular communication and support service communication
4. Increase high-interest and current print materials in the media center to support independent student learning and 21st century learning expectations achievement
5. Increase scheduled collaboration time for support service staff members to communicate with necessary parties to increase awareness and student achievement
6. Develop assessment and feedback mechanisms to analyze and improve services in library, special education, and health services as they relate to the school's 21st century learning expectations



## 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

The community of Hull and the district's governing body does not provide adequate funding for a wide range of school programs and services. For the first time in four years, the budget has begun to rebound, showing its first increase since FY07. Although the increase in the budget has allowed both honors and AP classes to grow steadily, budget cuts have also forced the elimination of business classes and the entire industrial arts department, including wood, metal, and the CAD lab. There is supplementary community financial support which allows extracurricular activities such as drama and athletics to survive during today's difficult financial times, but the voluntary financial support is not guaranteed and dependable, and the school budget limits for athletics and the theater arts leaves the future of these lively, well-loved programs in question. Acknowledging that the programs and services have been limited by budget restrictions, the most recent budget for professional and support staff contains sufficient personnel to support the population and for the programs and services offered at HHS. The same logic holds true for funding for materials, supplies, and equipment. The budget for high school expenses on these line items has declined significantly over the past several years. HHS is meeting the basic educational needs for the current conditions, given the present student population and services rendered. Although the high school has not funded a technology coordinator since fiscal year 2009, the district has supplemented this position with part-time staff members providing technology support for the district. This obstacle has slowed the response for necessary technology support at the high school level. In addition to reporting issues on "School Dude", there has been technical support offered to a few faculty members to provide SMART Board training and education for troubleshooting issues related to the new iPad technology that is utilized by the special education department and administrators. PLC

time includes common preparation time with groups investigating MCAS ELA data, MCAS math data, NEASC evidence collection, drop-out prevention, inquiry-based biology lessons, and a foreign language pacing guide. In addition to the regularly scheduled PLCs, teachers are expected to work with other department members in collaboration to build on their individual teaching goals, using a process based on reflective practices. Scheduling does not permit attendance in PLCs from 100% for the staff within the various departments. The school is making efforts to provide common planning time to address problems of practice. A need for professional development with a focus on curriculum revision is an ongoing point of concern. District-wide efforts are being created as an action plan to address a K-12 ELA vertical alignment with a focus on formative assessment and securing common core standards. The high school has also initiated a differentiated instruction initiative, with nearly half of the faculty attending training over a two-year period. While there are basic financial resources devoted to funding programs, staffing, curriculum, technology, equipment, and supplies, the overall funding dependability of the district is unstable. Thus, instability in funding will continue to impact students' achievement the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations, with continuing uncertainty about reinstating crucial programs like business and vocational education. (central office personnel, two- and five-year plans, school leadership, teachers, Endicott Survey, parents, panel presentation, teacher interviews, student interviews)

Although the school develops and funds its maintenance and repair of the building and school plant, there is no plan for systemic updates and maintenance of equipment. Although a dedicated capital budget has not been set forth since the building renovation, custodial and maintenance personnel report that funds are available to maintain the equipment necessary to meet the instructional and facility needs. According to the business manager, the annual

operating budget is adequate to only fund the school's basic needs for maintenance and upkeep of the school building and plant. The maintenance and custodial staff reports that they have responsibilities that are clearly defined in checklists and assignment rosters. Equipment and maintenance schedules are regularly checked and monitored internally and by external contractors. Faculty and staff members have access to "School Dude," a program that allows the situation to be reported to facilities managers for scheduling of maintenance problems that arise. Many of the faculty members have expressed satisfaction with the turnaround and ease of reporting maintenance troubles. Members of the school community have expressed satisfaction with the maintenance and cleanliness of the facility, and the school is impeccable. Although the building is maintained sufficiently given economic constraints, the current uncertainty of future funding, however, could have a major impact on the facility and programs. (facility tour, school support staff, business manager, two- and five-year plans, budget, and Endicott Survey)

Although there are two and five-year long-range plans in place for programs and services, enrollment and staffing, facility, technology, and capital improvements, there is no assured financial support which can sustain such current programs. According to central administration, there is a plan to reinstate business, vocational, and technology classes although funding is unavailable for these at this time as well. While there is a plan for programs and services in the two- and five-year plans, there is no guaranteed funding for such expansion or reinstatement of programs. Currently, staffing levels in core curriculum areas are adequate for present enrollment levels at the high school. Staffing in non-core curriculum areas, however, have steadily decreased over the past few years as a result of budget constraints. Forecasts show staffing levels as adequate for future enrollment but not for program reinstatement. The

renovation has made the plant adequate for the needs of the school community. While it is currently limited, there are plans to implement more classroom technology in the future. Evidence of budget expansion in technology is apparent within the school. There are new SMART Boards, iPads, Netbooks, laptops, and computers have recently been distributed, demonstrating 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations alignment with goals. Over 40% of students agrees that there are sufficient computers to utilize during the school day. Currently, there is no budget for major capital improvements as the renovations have improved the school facilities. At this time, there are no long-term plans for capital improvements. When the district establishes the means to fund the implementation of long-range plans to address system-wide shortcomings, the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by students will be better prepared for future success. If the school fails to meet these future expectations within the budget, students will not be able to compete at the global level. (self-study, facility tour, two- and five-year plans, school support staff, Endicott Survey, budget)

Although the faculty is directly responsible for implementing the budget, administrators are the primary influence for developing and establishing the budget. Faculty members are not actively and consistently involved in the process. While an annual wish list is produced by individual teachers identifying their particular needs, there is little coordination among faculty members within the same department. There is no management in the preparation of individual staff budgets using a collective rationale for the requirements of a particular department. The entire process falls into the hands of the principals and other central staff administrators in the absence of building chairs, department heads, or lead teachers. The various lists are prioritized by the principal and submitted to the superintendent. Prior to presenting the materials to the school committee, the list is re-evaluated aligning the items to address what the administration

identifies as the greatest concerns, with the needs of the students as the priority. After evaluating the list, the school committee reviews the request and weighs it against other budget items before approving or denying particulars to be passed on to the board of selectmen and finally to town meeting where the budget has historically been declining. Once the money is in the system, teachers do not know what available funds have been allocated for departmental budgets. Without faculty involvement in the process of establishing the budget, the development and delivery of the 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum will negatively impacted. (teacher interview, self-study, central office personal, teachers)

The school site and plant supports the delivery of high quality programs and services. There are however, inadequate plans and security of funding to guarantee the maintenance and repair of the building, school plant, and equipment. With renovations completed in 2005, the school building itself is of good quality and is adequate for meeting the needs of the current population and for the programs and services offered at HHS. Science teachers are pleased with their available technology and adequate space in order to deliver a high quality of instruction. The introduction of SMART Boards and the addition of student accessible computers have enhanced the delivery of a 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum. A technology-driven library boasting over 20 computers in addition to written materials has enhanced the opportunity for students to engage in independent research and inquiry. The addition of the Virtual High School Course enables the expansion of classes which otherwise would have been unavailable as a result of a lack of finances. The cafeteria and dining service areas for both staff and students provide a spacious, clean, and adequately equipped environment to provide quality nutrition for the current population. The performing arts have flourished at Hull with room in the auditorium for the entire school community for the multiple stage performances

each year. Storage space has been supplemented through the use of trailers placed outside to secure the many props and sets necessary to put on a full complement of shows. The music and art classes are also growing in popularity with adequate space for each subject in addition to the return of a performance-based band class. Physical education and athletics have made modifications to enhance available space by eliminating a paved road in the rear of the school in order to create a space for activities and practices for the student athletes. Technology space has moved beyond the library and language labs and expanded to include multiple classrooms with the introduction of at least four student computers in various subjects. Each HHS office is suitable for confidentiality and privacy in an effectively divided, clean, and pleasantly relaxing environment. The boiler room provides ample machinery to supply the school with water, hot and cold, and heat, while allowing alternating cycling for specific mechanical systems to prolong the lifetime of the electrical pumps. Regular maintenance is performed through a contracted engineer, and repairs have been made as necessary. Back-up generators are able to supplement power to approximately 80% of the school with an internal system check every Friday morning to assess potential issues with the unit. The numbers of the building's windows as well as environmental conditions have, on occasion, stressed the air temperature fluctuation system in the building where room temperatures may vary from one side of the building to the other, impacting the ability of students and staff members to function to the best of their ability. Serious inadequacies in the building which may interfere with the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations are readily addressed through the use of the "School Dude," the program used district-wide to assist educators in reporting concerns while aiding the plant support staff to identify, prioritize, and solve issues in a timely fashion. This support of ongoing plant maintenance and the school facility will continue the delivery of the high quality programs in which are embedded the school's 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills. (Endicott Survey, parent

interviews, two- and five-year plans, student interviews, teacher interviews, facility tour)

The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local, health, and safety regulations. Hull High School maintains current documentation which confirms that the school does in fact meet all applicable state and federal laws. The school's capital equipment is consistently monitored and checked for safety and working conditions. School community members deem the school generally adequately ventilated with good air quality, but some individuals did mention temperature imbalances throughout the building. All areas are handicapped accessible, including the press box on the sports field. Teachers and support staff members report using the "School Dude" program to report repair and safety concerns, and stakeholders report that repairs are regularly completed in a timely a manner. Chemicals are stored appropriately for the use of both custodial and teaching staff members, in addition to properly providing emergency care systems in science labs. Since the school has sufficiently maintained adequate and appropriate documentation of the physical plant and facilities, compliance with its 21st century learning expectations can be better assessed. (facility tour, support staff, facility tours)

Administrators and staff members actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education by reaching out through use of various outlets to those families who have been less connected with the school. Hull High School adheres to its mission statement in regard to being committed to academic excellence. In addition to sending out progress and term reports on a quarterly basis, the school has begun to integrate the use of social media in an effort to reach out to parents and the community in addition to soliciting community feedback. The school has linked its webpage to Facebook and a devoted blog, and a user can easily sign up for

email updates if they are not social media followers. Aside from using social media, HHS faculty and support staff will reach out to students and parents throughout the year, on an as-needed basis. Parents have reported that the school has supported students and parents in times of need. Individuals who may not be connected to computerized media and the Internet can find information in the local newspaper as well as on the local television station. Parents are also invited at least twice a year to come into the school and meet their student's teachers as well as to schedule a conference to discuss individual student progress. Hull High School also sends out a hard copy of the parent newsletter at report card time to update parents. The school is planning to use the X2/Aspen grade-reporting program to allow more frequent updates to parents in regard to student progress. While not all individuals in the community may be actively engaged in the school, HHS has maintained adequate and appropriate available lines of communication to the public. A variety of techniques is in place for communication based on an individual's preference or availability, varied lines of communications with the public help ensure that the school is implementing its mission of establishing a global community. (parent interviews, self-study, student interviews, blog, Facebook)

Despite being a community which has limited number of businesses, the school develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student-learning opportunities currently offered at Hull High School. The Hull community and school have formed a working relationship for the benefit of the students. Students are offered numerous internships within the community. Currently, 17 students are actively involved in internships with local businesses. Such programs offer authentic learning experiences for real-world application of students' 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Parents in the community have offered an

outpouring of support for co-curricular endeavors through The Boosters Club, Friends of Hull Theatre Arts, Friends of Hull Hockey, Parent Teachers Organization, and the Hull Academic Support Coalition; all have raised funds in excess of three hundred thousand dollars over the past few years to ensure the future of the school's co-curricular programs and to help to enrich the curriculum offered. Not only have these organizations donated their time to search to find funding, they have also generously donated their own time as personnel members for the school. Throughout the year, students have actively participated in community service outreach programs that have helped to enrich learning and to support 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. The Chamber of Commerce works with the school district to connect the school and community by identifying businesses such as the Hull Department of Public Works, Nantasket Seafood, Riddles Supermarket, and Mitchell Construction, to fulfill needs of the Hull community and students at HHS. These organizations fundamentally help to support Hull High School's 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. These relationships need to be continuously nurtured even more as financial difficulties will continue to exist over the next few years. Without such organizations to support the school, it is clear that there would be no athletics or theater arts programs for students to explore and enrich their lives and the academic curriculum. (teacher interviews, self-study, parents)

### **Commendations**

1. The value placed on individual student learning and the plan to reinstate and grow programs
2. A beautiful new facility which is exceptionally clean and well maintained and is designed to serve the students of Hull for many years to come
3. A strong community relationship which supports student learning and financial assistance

4. Innovative use of social media to reach out to the community

### **Recommendations**

1. Ensure adequate and dependable funding for sufficient equipment, instructional materials, and supplies
2. Ensure adequate funding to reinstate lead teachers
3. Ensure adequate funding to reinstate vocational technology programs
4. Provide funding for all curriculum development and vertical alignment k-12
5. Develop and fund a plan for future capital needs
6. Increase accessible maintenance and janitorial storage facilities
7. Secure reliable sources of funding so that there is less reliance on the goodwill of the local community
8. Develop a more consistent means to communicate budget information to faculty and staff members
9. Create a long-term, sustainable, up-dating and replacement plan for the school's technology to ensure effective curriculum delivery and support student 21<sup>st</sup> century skills

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

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

A school's initial/continued accreditation is based on satisfactory progress implementing valid recommendations of the visiting committee and others identified by the Commission as it monitors the school's progress and changes which occur at the school throughout the decennial cycle. To monitor the school's progress in the Follow-Up Program, the Commission requires that the principal of Hull 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 CPSS Standards. The Commission's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix on page 90. All other substantive changes should be included in the Two- and Five-Year Progress Reports and/or the Annual Report which is required of each member school to ensure that the Commission office has current statistical data on the school.

The Commission urges school officials to establish a formal follow-up program at once to review and implement all findings of the self-study and valid recommendations identified in the evaluation report. An outline of the Follow-Up Program is available in the Commission's Accreditation Handbook which was given to the school at the onset of the self-study.

Additional direction regarding suggested procedures and reporting requirements is provided at Follow-Up Seminars offered by Commission staff following the on-site visit.

The visiting team would like to commend the Hull High School community, particularly the high school's administration and NEASC visit co-chairs, for the outstanding hospitality and

attention to detail during the visit. This group of committed educators made the team feel like part of HHS and its tangible, omnipresent pride.

**Hull High School  
NEASC Accreditation Visit  
November 6-9, 2011**

Brian McCann, Chair  
Joseph Case High School  
Swansea, MA 02777

Joanne Hanson  
Marlborough High School  
Marlborough, MA 01752

Kevin Turner, Assistant Chair  
Harwich High School  
Harwich, MA 02645

Eliza LaCroix  
Ludlow High School  
Ludlow, MA 01056

Victoria Barbato  
Brighton High School  
Brighton, MA 02135

Timothy McDonald  
Natick High School  
Natick, MA 01760

Darren Bridgewater  
Triton Regional High School  
Byfield, MA 01922

Karen O'Leary  
Rockport Middle/High Schools  
Rockport, MA 01966

Mark Carney  
Dedham High School  
Dedham, MA 02026

Beth Ann Shepley  
Avon Middle High School  
Avon, MA 02322

Justine Flora  
Bedford High School  
Bedford, MA 01730

Bonnie Staiger  
Carver Middle High School  
Carver, MA 02330

Jill Frechette  
Tyngsborough High School  
Tyngsborough, MA 01879

Paul Vieira  
East Bridgewater High School  
East Bridgewater, MA 02333

Gina Gazzaniga  
Pittsfield High School  
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Marcus Walker  
Excel High School  
South Boston, MA 02127

**NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES**

**Commission on Public Secondary Schools**

**SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY**

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

- elimination of fine arts, practical arts, and student activities
- diminished upkeep and maintenance of facilities
- significantly decreased funding
- cuts in the level of administrative and supervisory staffing
- cuts in the number of teachers and/or guidance counselors
- cuts in the number of support staff
- decreases in student services
- cuts in the educational media staffing
- increases in student enrollment that cannot be accommodated
- 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