NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE

Rockville High School

Vernon, CT 06066

April 28 – May 1, 2013

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STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

THE DISTRIBUTION, USE AND SCOPE OF THE
VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

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

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

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INTRODUCTION

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

The governing body of the Association is its Board of Trustees which supervises the work of four Commissions: the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE), the Commission on Independent Schools (CIS), the Commission on Public Schools which is comprised of the Committee on Public Secondary Schools (CPSS), the 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 Committee. Those Standards are:

>   Teaching and Learning Standards
>   Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations
>   Curriculum
>   Instruction
>   Assessment of and for Student Learning
>
>   Support Teaching and Learning Standards
>   School Culture and Leadership
>   School Resources for Learning
>   Community Resources for Learning.

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

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Study

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Rockville High School, a committee of six 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 Rockville High School extended over a period of 27 school months from October 2011 to April 2014. The visiting committee was pleased to note that school board members and students joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

Public schools evaluated by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their adherence to the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the school's mission, learning expectations, and unique student population. In addition to using the Self-Study Guides developed by a representative group of New England educators and approved by the Committee, Rockville High School also used questionnaires developed by The Research Center at Endicott College to reflect the concepts contained in the Standards for Accreditation.

These materials provided discussion items for a comprehensive assessment of the school by the professional staff during the self-study.

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Committee

A visiting committee of 16 evaluators was assigned by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate the Rockville High School. The Committee members spent four days in Vernon, CT, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students and parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school meets the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented public schools, NEAS&C, and vocational institutions diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Rockville High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials

- 45 hours shadowing 15 students for a half day

- a total of 5 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 in the report was agreed to by visiting committee consensus. Sources of evidence for each conclusion drawn by the visiting committee appear in parenthesis in the Standards sections of the report. The seven Standards for Accreditation reports include commendations and recommendations that in the visiting committee's judgment will be helpful to the school as it works to improve teaching and learning and to better meet Committee Standards.

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

<h1 align="center">School and Community Summary</h1>

Rockville High School is a comprehensive public high school located in Vernon, Connecticut. The school serves the Vernon community along with select students from Bolton, East Windsor, Ellington, Manchester, Somers, South Windsor, Stafford, Tolland, and Union through the Rockville Regional Agricultural Education Program. Located 15 miles east of Hartford, both the Rockville and Talcottville sections of town are designated historic districts. Historic downtown Rockville is a designated Connecticut Main Street Community and is undergoing a significant revitalization effort. Vernon offers a variety of hiking trails, parks, and recreational facilities. Numerous retail stores and successful restaurants can be found in town.

With a 2011 population of approximately 29,665, Vernon is economically, racially, culturally, and ethnically diverse. In 2010-2011, student enrollment at RHS by race/ethnicity was the following: 69.8% White, 12.8% Black, 11.3% Hispanic, 5.2% Asian, and 0.7% American Indian. Vernon's 2011 median household family income was $65,248, with 7.8% of the town residents living below the poverty level. Regarding educational levels, 34% of Vernon residents aged 25 or older have earned a high school diploma, 29% have attended some college, and 25% have earned a bachelor's degree or higher. The population is employed in a variety of professions including manufacturing, finance/insurance, retail, and service industries. In 2010, Vernon's unemployment rate was 5.8%. In 2010-2011, 23.8% of the school population qualified for free or reduced-price meals. The population of the town has been relatively stable for over a decade.

The Vernon Public School district includes seven schools. Their names, grades served, and 2010 student populations are as follows: Rockville High School (9-12, 1,060 students), Vernon Center Middle School (6-8, 773 students), Lake Street School (K-5, 288 students), Center Road School (K-5, 504 students), Maple Street School (K-5, 309 students), and Northeast School (K-5, 299 students). The five-year enrollment change for the 2010-2011 school year was -9.8%, with 3,598 students served in the entire district. The 2009-2010 total expenditure per pupil was $12,655, compared to $13,783 for the District Reference Group (DRG) and $13,780 for the state. Local revenues funded 55.2% of the district budget (excluding school construction), with 34.0% coming from state funds and 9.7% coming from federal funds.

The average attendance rate for RHS in 2009-2010 was 94.3%. The graduation rate for the Class of 2009 was 86.7%. The average dropout rate for the past two years has been 3.8%. In 2008-2009, teachers were absent an average of 8.2 days. In 2010-2011, there were 84.20 full-time equivalents (FTEs) in general education, 9.80 in special education, 7.50 in counseling, social work, and psychology, 4.60 in administration, and 1.50 in instructional specialist positions, resulting in a student-to-teacher ratio of 11:1. Individual teachers currently carry an average load of 82 students with an average class size of 16 students. The Alternative Special Education Program (ASEP) allows two teachers to work with 20 students in a more structured learning environment. The Total Alternative Learning Center (TALC) provides 12 students the opportunity to learn from four teachers in a highly controlled and structured small group setting. In addition, Rockville High School has an extensive English as a Second Language (ESL) program. Students attend school for 184 days and for a minimum of 996 hours.

All freshmen are placed in academy teams to provide students with a personalized learning environment that maximizes successful transition into the high school and minimizes anonymity. Freshman students concentrate on the five core academic areas of English, mathematics, social studies, science, and business office applications. Students entering RHS in grades nine and ten may select from college preparatory and honors level courses. Courses are also offered at Advanced Placement (AP) and Early

College Experience (ECE) levels for qualified students, with 38% of students enrolled in honors level courses and 11% of students enrolled in ECE or AP level courses. Students in grades eleven and twelve maintain access to a limited number of general level courses that are being phased out of the RHS Program of Studies.

In the Class of 2012, 45% of graduates attended four-year colleges, 34% enrolled in two-year colleges, 2% enrolled in vocational schools,10% entered the workforce, and 4% entered the military. Fifty-two percent of the Class of 2012 earned college credit through College Career Pathways, University of Connecticut ECE, and/or AP courses. Graduates take advantage of the considerable educational opportunities available as they choose from such colleges and universities as the University of Connecticut, University of Hartford, Eastern Connecticut State University, and Manchester Community College. Students also articulate with local magnet schools such as the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts and the Connecticut International Baccalaureate (IB) Academy.

Through the College Career Pathways Program, more than 335 students are provided the opportunity to receive college credit for course work completed at Rockville High School. There are eight programs offered in the areas of Agricultural Education, Allied Health, Child Development/Early Childhood Education, Communications, Criminal Justice, Fire Technology, Office Administrative Careers, and Technology Education. Rockville High School's Career Center offers students a mentoring program, assistance with work papers, and career speakers. Additionally, the Career Center provides a link with the Vernon/Rockville community through the School-to-Business Partnership with local businesses that offer internships and job shadowing opportunities to students. Students also articulate with local magnet schools such as the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts and the Connecticut IB Academy. Rockville High School students are recognized for their accomplishments through local and national awards, honor roll awards, ROCK Cards (for responsible and respectful behavior), undergraduate awards, senior awards and scholarships, sports awards, and Connecticut Cool Schools.

ROCKVILLE HIGH SCHOOL
CORE VALUES, BELIEFS, AND LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

CORE VALUES AND BELIEFS

The Rockville High School Community is committed to providing a safe and respectful environment where all members are dedicated to life-long learning. By working collaboratively with families and community members, we will graduate students who are productive and contributing members of a dynamic, global, 21_{st} century society. We believe rigorous and meaningful academic and extracurricular programs afford all students the opportunity to become Responsible, Open minded, Critically thinking, and Knowledgeable.
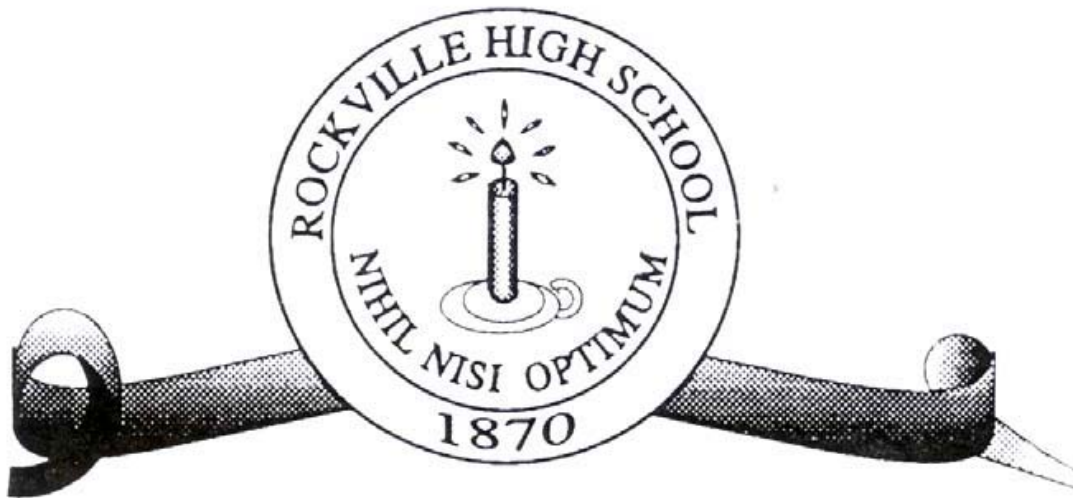
LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

We are the ROCK! The Rockville High School student will...

Demonstrate personal and civic responsibility.
Demonstrate respectful behavior and compassion.
Use multiple tools to access, evaluate, and apply information.
Solve problems through analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and reflection.
Communicate knowledge clearly and effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences.

1

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.

Core Values, Beliefs and Learning

Rockville High School, (RHS), engages in a collaborative and inclusive process informed by limited current research-based best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning. Following a NEASC pre-self-study conference in the fall of 2009, the attendees, a small group of administrators and teachers, developed the acronym, ROCK, (Responsible, Open-Minded, Critical Thinkers and Knowledgeable). A number of faculty members and an administrator met to convert the mission and expectations statement to core values, beliefs and learning expectations, (CVBLE). The core values, beliefs and learning expectations committee devised a process to engage stakeholders in the core values, beliefs and learning expectations development, including a document to collect feedback from all departments and from the School-to-Business Partnership. In the fall of 2010, the committee developed the learning expectations. The evidence provided suggests that its use of current research-based best practices was limited. Departments provided feedback to the committee and made revisions to the learning expectations. The faculty approved the draft in the spring of 2011, and the draft was presented to students in their advisories in the fall of 2011. Based on student input, revisions were made. The faculty and the Vernon Board of Education approved the document early in 2012. Posters of the Rockville High School Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations are visible throughout the school and are posted on the school website. According to the Endicott survey results, the majority of students and parents are generally familiar with the core values and beliefs and can identify the ROCK values. Although teachers do not formally or regularly refer to the core values, beliefs and learning expectations document, 46.8 percent of them considers the school's core values and beliefs about learning when making important teaching decisions. They generally know the document and some can identify ways it is reflected in their curriculum and instructional practices. When all constituents are included in the process of developing and revising the core values, beliefs and learning expectations,

then stakeholders will have a greater sense of ownership and commitment to this document. (core values, beliefs and learning expectations poster visible throughout the school, power points for faculty 5/2010 and 10/2010, core values, beliefs and learning expectations committee timeline, interviews)

The school has broad and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social and civic competencies and are consistent with the school's core values and beliefs. The rubric committee, consisting of an administrator and a representative from each department, was established to develop a new set of school-wide rubrics. The rubric committee analyzed current research related to formative assessment and to the use of analytical rubrics. The committee sought to develop rubrics that were flexible and that could be adapted to meet the needs of teachers from all disciplines as well as to align with their course assignments. Five new analytical rubrics were devised by a team of fifteen teachers representing all departments and lead by the principal. Suggestions for revising the rubrics were made by department heads and members of the senior leadership committee. Currently, the rubrics have not been distributed or approved, and there is no plan or timeline for implementation. As the academic, social and civic rubrics are consistently implemented, the school will begin to be able to measure individual and school-wide achievement of its five 21st learning expectations.
(core values, beliefs and learning expectations document, student work, teacher interviews, administrator interviews)

The school's core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations are reflected in the culture of the school, guide the school's policies, procedure, decisions, and resource allocations, and are beginning to drive curriculum revision, instruction, and assessment. The Endicott survey results suggest that constituents view the Rockville High School as safe and supportive. Organizations such as Gay Student Alliance, SSNAP, and Rock Stars support the school's "commitment to providing a safe and respectful environment." Partnerships with local businesses, educational organizations and institutes of higher

learning, and programs such as The Next Step reflect the school's commitment to work collaboratively with community members on behalf of all students. The school's basic curriculum, broad support services, rich elective offerings, and extensive extracurricular programs, "afford all students the opportunity to become Responsible, Open-minded, Critical Thinkers, and Knowledgeable." Programs such as Taste of Languages, a community, multi-cultural outreach program, and school study tours abroad support students in becoming "members of a dynamic, global, 21st century society." Since the approval of the core values, beliefs and learning expectations, the board of education has used the core values, beliefs and learning expectations as a guide for making school policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations. The board's approval of a community service graduation requirement is one example of its commitment to the core values, beliefs and learning expectations. The district supports the school's core values, beliefs and learning expectations by funding professional development on relevant topics such as differentiated instruction, and on recommendations from the 21st century learning team such as school-wide WIFI access, BYOD and shared network access with the town. The school principal encourages and supports initiatives such as Rock Cards, the perfect attendance celebration, programs such as STEM and interdisciplinary courses that promote the core values and beliefs and develop the 21st learning expectations.

The Rockville High School curriculum is evolving to reflect the core values, beliefs and learning expectations. In response to the core values, beliefs and learning expectations, the "general level" was eliminated for ninth and tenth graders and there are plans to eliminate the "general level" for all grades for the 2014-15 school year. All students now are required to take at least one heterogeneously grouped class before graduation. All departments are involved with a five-year curriculum review cycle. The handbook *Greater Expectations: A Curriculum Development Handbook for the Twenty-First Century 2011-2016* provides a common format and guidelines for aligning curriculum with state and national standards and for implementing common, formative, and summative assessments. Revised curriculum

will include 21st century learning expectations, implications for instructional practices, and the development and implementation of school-wide rubrics. When curricula revisions are completed according to the Greater Expectations Handbook, the core values, beliefs and learning expectations will be more fully realized in course content, instructional practices, and assessment (*Greater Expectations: A Curriculum Development Handbook for the Twenty-First Century 2011-2016,* teacher interviews, class observations, Endicott survey)

Although Rockville High School has not established a formal method or timeline for reviewing and revising its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, the "district has plans [to] highlight this task as a future priority." In preparation for its NEASC self-study, a committee of Rockville High School faculty members and an administrator met to review the mission and expectations statement created for the previous self-study. The process of developing core values, beliefs and learning expectations began based on district and school priorities and on a limited number of data sources. The core values, beliefs and learning expectations was approved by the faculty in January, 2012, by the board of education in February, 2012, and by district administrators in Summer, 2012. Suggestions for informal annual reflection on the core values, beliefs and learning expectations and comprehensive reviews at the school's two-, five-, and seven-year accreditation marks are under consideration. At this time there is no opportunity for constituents to share information about 21st century skills and learning; to examine and analyze student achievement of school-wide learning expectations; to assess student performance on standardized tests and on student work; to have discussions about research on learning, including an assessment of the implications of such research on the school's beliefs about learning; or to evaluate the learning expectations and their alignment with the district's learning goals. A fully developed review process that includes input from multiple constituency groups and is based on data and research will ensure that Rockville High School has

current and relevant core values, beliefs and learning expectations to guide the school. (interviews, self-study, committee notes)

Commendations:

- The influence of the school's core values and beliefs on the board of education, students, and parents

- The new programs, staff, course offerings, revised curriculum, and recent improvements of some technology reflecting strong support of core values, beliefs and learning expectations

- The rich and diverse curricular offerings that reflect core values, beliefs and learning expectations and provide students with various educational pathways

- The prominent display of the core values, beliefs and learning expectations posters throughout the high school

Recommendations:

- Develop and implement a plan to regularly review Rockville High School's Core Values Beliefs and Learning Expectations which includes all constituents in the process, is informed by current research, and utilizes student achievement data

- Approve and implement the use of analytic rubrics related to Rockville High School's academic, social, and learning expectations

- Develop a process to ensure that 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, are central to the development of policies and procedures, and drive the decision-making and the allocation of resources

2

Curriculum

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

1. The curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

2. The curriculum is written in a common format that includes:
   - units of study with essential questions, concepts, content,

      and skills
   - the school's 21st century learning expectations
   - instructional strategies
   - assessment practices that include the use of school-wide

      analytic and course specific rubrics.

3. The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through:
   - inquiry
   - 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.

Curriculum

A small portion of the curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Based on the Endicott survey, 41.7 percent of the staff and 79.4 percent of the parents believe that the curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations. The RHS Program of Studies identifies the 21st century learning expectations, and identifies each curriculum area's expectations for student learning, but the expectations identified by the curriculum areas do not align directly with the school's 21st century learning expectations. There is no established process for the school to collect and review data results regarding the school's learning expectations for making decisions to add or delete courses or units from the curriculum. When the addition of a course is proposed by a teacher, there is a process of approval required for which the teacher submits the course to a board of education subcommittee for tentative approval, pilots the course, then writes a curriculum for approval by the subcommittee. This process occasionally includes the use of student surveys to indicate an interest in or demand for the course, but the surveys are not mandated or formalized. The subcommittee, before granting approval, asks the teachers to demonstrate how the proposed new course will meet the school's learning expectations, and this is required to complete the writing of the curriculum under the *Greater Expectations* guidelines. With the pending implementation of the rigorous Common Core State Standards, RHS has decided to delete general level courses because they were not meeting the standards of the 21st century learning expectations. RHS has begun to offer more Early College Experience courses to increase rigor and to provide opportunities for students to broaden critical thinking skills while earning college credit. Currently, most of the written curriculum does not specifically clarify how students practice the 21st century learning expectations; however, the curriculum that has been recently written or revised using the new *Greater Expectations* format does identify RHS's 21st learning expectations, and does demonstrate how the students will practice or engage in those

expectations. Likewise, the curriculum guides that have gone through the *Greater Expectations* process of evaluation, development, and implementation do clearly identify clear connections between course content and the learning expectations. However, since the *Greater Expectations* was only developed in March of 2011, and because many parts of the curriculum are in various stages of development, implementation, and evaluation, it is unclear in which courses students specifically practice the 21st century learning expectations, or which curricular areas offer experiences related to the learning expectations. RHS offers a wide range of curricular and co-curricular programs in all of the curricular areas. This variety of courses and opportunities provides students with a range of possible ways to access learning experiences related to the school's learning expectations. The core values, beliefs and learning expectations are posted in most teachers' classrooms and around the school, in addition to being present in the Program of Studies. However, in discussions, only about half of teachers were able to identify specifically which learning expectations they are responsible for teaching. Since RHS lacks a solid uniform curriculum, as evidenced by the various states of the curriculum guides and incomplete nature of the revision process, the learning expectations that teachers are responsible for teaching are unclear. When all curricula are written in a common format, identifying the learning expectations for each course and clarifying the connections between and among content, learning experiences, teachers, and expectations, then it will be easier to ensure that all students access courses and experiences that allow them to practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations. (classroom observations, self-study, facility tour, teacher interview, board of education school leadership, Endicott survey, RHS Program of Studies).

RHS has begun the necessary steps to ensure that the curriculum is being rewritten and revised 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, and assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics. Currently, only 24.8 percent of staff

believes that there is a common, formal, curriculum template that is used in all subject areas. The recent creation of the *Greater Expectations* document to guide the writing of curriculum is designed to ensure that newly revised curricula include alignment to standards, learner expectations, pacing, embedded literacy, embedded information and technological literacy, instructional strategies, learning experiences, assessments, and instructional resources. *Greater Expectations* guides and ensures a process for teachers to write curricula to include standards, content and concepts, skills and strategies, big idea(s), essential question(s), resources and materials, activities, and standards-based assessments with detailed scoring rubrics. The *Greater Expectations* guides all curricula to link central questions to content, skills, and 21st century learning expectations to National or State Standards. New curricula developed under the guidance of *Greater Expectations* includes standards, content and concepts, skills and strategies, big idea(s), essential question(s), resources and materials, activities, and standards-based assessments with detailed content area scoring rubrics. RHS department heads and teachers reported that the newly mandated Connecticut Common Core Standards and newly revised State Standards have been a driving force in curriculum development to include RHS's applicable 21st century learning expectations and instructional practices with National and State Standards. *Greater Expectations* does guide the development of standard-based assessments for student performance using detailed scoring rubrics with a four-point scale, but at this time there is no definitive use of school-wide analytical rubrics as part of any formative or summative assessment practices. *Greater Expectations* outlines the district's five-year curriculum review and development cycle, beginning in the 2010-2011 school year; however, systematic review and development of the curriculum is done inconsistently. When a curriculum area reaches the evaluation and development stage of the curriculum cycle, there is no system in place to ensure or allow for all courses in the curriculum area to be evaluated. At this time, the school does not have curriculum guides for all its courses. The systematic implementation, coordination, and safeguarding of the curriculum to ensure that 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, and assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics will result in students' achievement of the school's 21st century expectations for learning. (self-study, teacher interview, board of education, department leaders, school leadership, Endicott survey)

The RHS curriculum emphasizes to varying degrees, 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, and informed and ethical use of technology. As evidenced in the Endicott survey, 57.3 percent of students, 69.4 percent of staff, and 76.1 percent of parents feel that the students are being challenged to think critically with intellectual rigor and to use higher order thinking for problem solving. *Greater Expectations* guides the development of inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking and now guides curriculum writing designed around essential questions that are aligned with National and State Standards. With this model there is deliberate guidance to incorporate and emphasize inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking in RHS's newly developed or revised curriculum. National and State Curriculum mandates these skills as do the Common Core State Standards which has resulted in more inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking activities in RHS's curriculum planning. Honors, Advanced Placement (AP), Allied Health, Science Technology and Engineering (STEM), and Early College Experience (ECE) classes at RHS suggest the school is committed to offering students rigorous curriculum replete with higher order thinking and depth of understanding. The collapsing of the general and college levels has, in the opinion of the faculty, led to a decrease in the rigor of general and college level classes. Although there is evidence of curricular overlap among subject areas, the curriculum offers some opportunities for specific cross-disciplinary experiences. The English and social studies departments now offer American Cultures, an eleventh grade cross-disciplinary, co-taught course. American Cultures and Video Production are the only true cross-disciplinary, co-taught courses as reported in the self-study. Steps

have been taken for more of these types of courses to be developed and implemented at RHS. The technology education department is planning to implement a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) program that will allow for true cross-disciplinary learning in math, science, and technology. Elective areas such as technology education, art, and world languages have implemented some cross-disciplinary projects. Members of the art and agricultural education departments have collaborated on an equine unit, and the art and technology departments offer cross-disciplinary curriculum in Video Production I and II. As indicated in the Endicott survey, 59.4 percent of students feels that the school provides options for off-campus learning. Additionally, 57 percent of staff members and 54.4 percent of parents feel the school emphasizes authentic applications of knowledge and skills. Authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school are widely evidenced in specific curriculum areas at RHS. The agricultural education department requires students to complete a Supervised Agriculture Experience Program (SAEP) beginning in 9th grade and culminating in 12th grade. SAEP offers a range of career skill-building opportunities and industry-accepted practices in real world situations. Family and consumer science courses such as Child Development and Childhood Education allow students to plan, conduct, participate in, and evaluate all aspects of the RHS Nursery School Program. The Education Practicum and Independent Living courses allow students to have authentic experiences in assisting in the instruction of independent living skills to students with special needs. The English department has been very active in facilitating students' submissions of work for writing contests on both the state and national level. For example, students have opportunities to submit a portfolio of their work to the Connecticut Young Writers Competition or the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards Competition for possible publication. In some classes, students are asked to lead formal public presentations or are required to do community service as a course requirement. For example, students in the agricultural education department can participate in career development events during which they can demonstrate or utilize their course work. Recently the school has instituted a community service graduation requirement of ten community service hours per school year. The career center provides

students with multiple opportunities for career shadowing. As evidenced in the Endicott survey, 78 percent of students, 61.5 percent of staff, and 66.2 percent of parents feel that the curriculum emphasizes the informed and ethical use of technology. The core values, beliefs and learning expectations emphasize that students should be able to "use multiple tools to access, evaluate, and apply information." As reported in the self-study, certain departments have students sign an additional contract to ensure the ethical use of subject-specific technology. The *Greater Expectations* guide requires all revised curriculum to embed information and technological literacy into the course. Teacher interviews and facility tours suggest departments incorporate technology as much as possible to enhance student learning and to increase the understanding of concepts. However, access to technology, such as computers and LCD projectors within the building, is very limited. Currently, there are various policies on the use of student cell phones, and the school is in the process of implementing a Bring Your Own Technology (BYOT) policy. Students are required to sign a technology contract at the beginning of the year regarding the acceptable and ethical use of technology. Continuing the school's effort to more consistently and systematically revise the curriculum documents and to expand upon existing learning activities that increase student depth of understanding and application of knowledge will result in all students being engaged in thinking critically and applying what they have learned across the curriculum. (self-study, facility tour, student work, teacher interview, students, department leaders, school leadership, Endicott survey)

No formal conditions are in place to ensure that the written curriculum is consistent with the taught curriculum. Teachers who are not yet tenured are observed by their respective curriculum coordinators and tenured teachers are observed by administration. However, this observation process is currently in flux, and does not ensure effective oversight of alignment between the written and taught curriculum. It is also not clear if this is the intent of the observation process as the objections of evaluation are not made clear to faculty. Because these conditions are not in place, it becomes difficult to determine to

what extent the written curriculum and taught curriculum align. Observations during student shadowing and teacher interviews indicate that instruction in classes often aligns with what written curriculum is available. This is particularly true in those classes in which the teacher is the author of the written curriculum. For several courses there is either no written curriculum or the curriculum has not been reviewed or updated and is therefore obsolete, meaning that not all taught curricula align accurately or at all with any written curricula. The completion of the written curriculum revision process and implementation of a system to ensure the written curriculum is being taught will result in all students being able to access and achieve the school's 21st century expectations for student learning. (classroom observations, self-study, student shadowing, teacher interview, school leadership)

There is a small amount of curricular coordination and vertical articulation between and among the academic areas within the school and with the sending schools, but it is not purposefully designed to result in all students achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. The curriculum review cycle, as outlined in *Greater Expectations,* allows teachers some time for development, review, and evaluation of the curriculum, but teachers and school leaders have expressed that the time provided is not sufficient to accomplish the goal. In the Endicott survey, only 22 percent of teachers feel that they have sufficient time to be engaged in formal curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work. As indicated by the self-study, the faculty meets regularly within disciplines and is given common time to plan, but this time is not used specifically for curricular development, and there is almost no formal collaboration among departments. Exceptions exist, including the American Cultures class, which is a collaborative effort between the social studies and English departments, a new technology education program focusing on science, technology, engineering, and math, as well as individual units between the art and agricultural education departments, but there is not a system in place to encourage or support these efforts. Likewise, while certain departments coordinate with the sending school, such as the business and computer science department, mathematics, and fine arts, generally speaking, vertical

articulation does not exist. Curriculum guides exist for a few departments, but not for all. These K through 12 curriculum guides do not all illustrate effective coordination and articulation, but this aspect is being addressed by *Greater Expectations*, and, as new guides are written, they will be in alignment with these goals. However, the school leaders stated that the upcoming Common Core State Standards have led to a delay in the full implementation of the review cycle, but that once completed, there will be increased articulation between and among all grades. When there is an increase in coordination within and between departments, as well as additional vertical articulation with the sending school and consistent K through 12 curriculum guides, all students will have a more structured and effective opportunity to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, teacher interviews, Endicott survey, school leadership)

Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center vary in their sufficiency to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities. The staffing levels, according to teacher interviews, school leadership, and panel presentation, are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum. Class sizes, both reported and observed, are reasonable and indicate adequate staffing. The report on expenditures provided by the self-study indicates a decrease over the last three years in expenditures for instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, and library/media resources. The majority of teachers, when completing the Endicott survey did not feel that the school has sufficient professional staff, instructional materials, or appropriate facilities to fully implement and support the curriculum. The vast majority of students, however, felt that they had the necessary instructional materials for their courses. A shortage of technology, including wireless access, available computer labs, and classroom presentation tools limits the teachers' ability to fully implement the curriculum. Some curricular changes, in the Algebra I courses, for example, have been delayed because the funds are not available to purchase textbooks or necessary materials. Instructional supplies that have been planned for in the

curriculum have sometimes not been purchased because of budgetary issues. Teachers have raised

additional funds through grants to supplement departmental budgets. Some teachers have used personal

funds to purchase significant technology for the classroom. The library/media center, through its own

collection and the use of interlibrary loan, has access to sufficient print resources, although some

teachers felt these were sometimes dated. The non-print resources were significant, including online

databases and downloadable books, but some teachers expressed a desire for additional resources

including streaming videos and a larger DVD library. The access to the library's computer lab was

limited, with teachers stating that it was frequently booked three weeks in advance. Most of the facility

is sufficient to implement the school's 21st century learning goals, but there was concern expressed

regarding insufficiently equipped science labs and extreme temperature fluctuations during the winter

and summer that make implementation of the school's learning goals difficult. Only 15.7 percent of

teachers and 25.4 percent of parents answering the Endicott survey felt that co-curricular programs are

adequately funded. In the self-study, teachers report funding co-curricular programs through department

and personal funds. This has limited enrichment opportunities and has caused school-funded travel

opportunities to be limited to local events only. For co-curricular activities, students have been required

to provide their own supplies, parent volunteers have provided transportation, and participation in events

has been curtailed due to inadequate funding. Adequate funding of technology, instructional materials,

supplies and co-curricular programs, to complement the facilities, staffing, and library/media resources,

will allow the curriculum and co-curricular programs to be fully implemented. (classroom observation,

self-study, panel presentation, facility tour, teacher interview, students, Endicott survey)

The district provides the school's professional staff with limited personnel, time, and financial resources

for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using current

research, but the time provided is not sufficient and assessment results are used inconsistently. Each

department falls under the supervision of a curriculum coordinator and department head, which in some

departments is the same person, who are responsible for the coordination and articulation of curriculum. At the discretion of these individuals, as well as by the timing of the cycle outlined in *Greater Expectations,* professional staff are provided release time during the year and paid professional time over the summer to devote to curriculum coordination and articulation, particularly the process of development and review of curriculum. Once developed, a curriculum is submitted to the school board's curriculum sub-committee for approval. However, teachers and school leaders, including the curriculum coordinators, do not feel that the amount of time provided is adequate. Many members of the professional staff are actively involved in the process of ongoing curriculum and development based on their individual willingness to participate. According to the Endicott survey, 56 percent of teachers feels that they are directly involved in curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work. The school has a regular curriculum review cycle of five years which is divided into a year of evaluation, a year of development, then three years of implementation as outlined in *Greater Expectations*. This cycle has only recently been implemented, and while every curriculum area is currently in one of those three stages, not all curriculum areas have yet undergone evaluation or development of their curricula in this cycle. Over the past three years, expenditures on curriculum development, evaluation, and revision, including adoption of new texts, has dropped significantly, from $307,077 in the 2009-10 school year to $46,081 in the 2011-12 school year. Looking specifically at expenditures on review and evaluation of curriculum, however, expenditures have remained relatively flat, with $10,357 spent in 2009-10, $7,339 spent in 2010-11, and $12,364 spent in 2011-12. The faculty has used current research during the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum, including Larry Ainsworth's research found in *Power Standards, Rigorous Curriculum Design,* and *"Unwrapping" the Standards*, Douglas Reeves' *Making Standards Work*, and the research of Robert Marzano. Teachers received professional development in this research, but newer teachers at Rockville High School have not had that training. Various departments make use of data related to student performance to inform curriculum development and revision, but this is not used consistently. The absence of an adopted set of school-wide rubrics

limits the availability of data related to the school's learning expectations. Data from state-wide assessments, notably CAPT, informal assessments, SATs, common department assessments, and faculty and student surveys are used by some departments to inform curriculum revisions, but according to teachers and school leaders involved in the process of curriculum revision, this use of data is not uniform or well established. Curriculum development of new courses is well supported, and primarily based on surveys indicating student interest. Because of this, a wide range of courses is offered, providing a variety of educational opportunities. An increase in the time, financial resources, and assessment data protocols will help support the existing process of developing, evaluating, and revising curriculum with current research to meet the school's 21st century expectations for student learning. (self-study, teacher interview, school board, school leadership, Endicott survey)

Commendations:

- The creation of *Greater Expectations* to oversee and guide the process of curriculum evaluation, development, and implementation so that all curricula will be written in a common format
- The authentic and innovative learning opportunities both in and out of the classroom and opportunities for civic engagement
- The variety of course offerings provides a myriad of ways for students to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations
- The planned implementation of the STEM curriculum
- The Supervised Agriculture Experience Program
- The ability of the staff to create new courses to address the evolving needs of the students and the school community

Recommendations:

- Complete the process of curriculum evaluation, development, and implementation within the established time line using the districts *Greater Expectations* guides to ensure written curricula includes standards, content and concepts, skills and strategies, big idea(s), essential question(s), resources and materials, activities, and 21st century learning expectations linked to National or State Standards.

- Collect and review data on student achievement regarding the school's learning expectations for use in curriculum evaluation

- Increase the opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning experiences within the curriculum

- Develop a process to ensure a clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum

- Increase formal opportunities for curricular coordination and articulation between academic areas and with the sending school

- Provide sufficient instructional materials, technology, equipment, and supplies to fully implement the curriculum and support co-curricular and other learning opportunities

- Ensure 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

3 Instruction

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

1. Teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.

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

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

4. Teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by:
   - using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments
   - examining student work
   - using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents
   - examining current research
   - engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.

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

Instruction

The examination of instructional practices to ensure consistency with the core values, beliefs and learning expectations at Rockville High School is infrequent. Although most teachers are aware of the core values, beliefs and learning expectations, a minority of teachers reported they examine their instructional practices to make sure they are consistent with the core values, beliefs and learning expectations. There were minimal examples of student work which directly related to the school's learning expectations, and school-wide rubrics have yet to be formally approved. Students sometimes had difficulty articulating the core values, beliefs and learning expectations and reported that the core values, beliefs and learning expectations are not part of daily instruction. There is evidence that the process for ensuring that instructional practices are consistent with the core values, beliefs and learning expectations is in the beginning stages. The core values, beliefs and learning expectations are posted in most classrooms, the acronym ROCK is ubiquitous around the building, and two Instructional Rounds have occurred over the last two years. The Instructional Rounds are a district-wide initiative in which a team of administrators and teachers observe specific instructional practices. By design, only a few teachers at RHS were observed, however, feedback was limited and ineffective. A district administrator observed two teachers during the Learning Community Observation as part of another district observation initiative. The teachers observed during the Learning Community Observations reported the feedback from these observations were timely and helpful. Teachers meet with peers three times a month during which reflection about teaching practices is occasionally part of the meeting agenda and discussion. Teachers reported that the departments were not assigned primary responsibility for a specific learner expectation. When teachers' instructional practices are observed and feedback is provided with greater fidelity to ensure consistency with the core values, beliefs and learning expectations, the alignment between instruction and the core values, beliefs and learning expectations

will be more effective for students as they strive to meet their learning goals. (self-study, teacher interviews, classroom visits, student interviews, Endicott survey)

The school's 21st century learner expectations are sometimes supported by teachers' instructional practices throughout the school. Personalized instruction was observed in a class in which a student who had been absent received personalized instruction; another teacher was observed giving a student one-on-one instruction in the agriculture education program, and several teachers offer after-school help to students; however, some students reported that these sessions were not always effective. Students are given the opportunity to choose assignments and projects based on their interests. Differentiation was used during a history lesson by giving students the choice of three levels of competency: novice, apprentice and practitioner. NovaNet is available for students to use to recover lost credit, and teachers report that modifications are made for students with IEPs, on 504 plans, and in the ELL program. Evidence exists to support that cross-disciplinary learning takes place in some areas. For example, students use math to complete most science labs; a teacher used a poem as the basis for solving a math problem; the Empty Bowl project incorporates components of art and family and consumer sciences, and world population is analyzed with information derived from research in biology, social studies and technology. United States History students produce a newsletter using Publisher software. There are two co-taught, cross-discipline courses: American Cultures (English/social studies) and Video Production (art/technology education.) Evidence exists that several teachers design instructional strategies to engage students as active and self-directed learners. Students may design independent studies and participate in hands-on and authentic learning activities, such as the character development project, nutrition label interpretations, Floriculture, the Greenhouse Integrated Pest Management lesson, and students prepared a presentation on a Constitutional amendment challenged in the Supreme Court. The agriculture education, art, English, health, math, science, social studies, and technology education departments provided lesson plans that engaged students in active and self-directed learning indicating that this is happening in many of the school's core content and elective areas. The use of instructional

practices that emphasize inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking is evident in some

advanced and honors classes. Parents and their students in higher level classes reported that these skills

were evident. However, parents and their students in the general or college track did not feel this

happened consistently. Inquiry-based instruction is evident in most science classes, and other higher

level skills are employed in AP English, French IV, AP Studio Art and Statistics. In AP English class,

students completed multiple choice questions from a previous AP exam. Students had to justify their

choice in writing. Students also answered an open response question practicing analysis and synthesis

skills. Opportunities for students to demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills to authentic

tasks are most evident in the agriculture education department. Students are taught skills in water

quality, aquaculture, animal handling, and machinery maintenance and repair in a hands-on educational

setting that meets industry-accepted practices. The elective departments utilize authentic assignments

on a regular basis; for example, the Green Team video in technology education, the RHS school store in

the special education department, and the nursery school in the family and consumer science

department. A physics class completes weekly labs simulating real-life situations, taking advantage of

the school's long block format. Authentic assignments were also evident during the welcoming

reception in the form of the student produced video, student musical performances, and student made

appetizers and pastries. Students have the opportunity for self-assessment and reflection, however not

all teachers use this instructional strategy on a regular basis, and it is most evident in the elective areas.

Examples of self-assessment are found across the curriculum. Self-assessment is an important part of

the performing art and visual art instructional program. In the Agricultural Education's Supervised

Agricultural Experience Program (SAEP), students design their own cumulative project, setting

individual benchmarks and criteria. Agriculture students also use a variety of self-assessment rubrics,

such as an Employability Rubric. In the Study Strategies class, students self-assess their progress on

their Individualized Study Plan. Reading Strategies students are required to reflect on an assigned

current events article. In a business class, students self-assess their understanding of a lesson by

identifying their place on a target; "hitting the bull's eye, I really understand the concept" to "I am not hitting the target, I am unclear about the concept", and "I am lost." The availability of technology in order to provide effective instruction is lacking at RHS. Most classrooms have only one computer. SMARTBoards and LCDs are only in a few select classrooms, and the Wi-Fi is not consistently available to all classroom teachers. However, when possible, teachers incorporate technology into their instruction. The other available technology includes satellite technology, graphing calculators, seismographs, Ready-or-Not simulated newborns, digital pedometers, a vocational laptop cart, and music notation software programs. Teachers report that the lack of professional development and technical problems impede their ability to effectively utilize the available technology as an instructional strategy. As teachers personalize instruction, cross-disciplinary lessons, engage students as active and self-directed learners, emphasize inquiry, problem solving and higher order thinking, application of knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, encourage self-assessment and reflection, and integrate technology in their instructional strategies the instruction will help ensure students achieve 21st century skills. (self-study, student work, classroom visits, student interviews, teacher interviews)

Teachers at RHS inconsistently adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student. Although there are pockets of multi-activity planned lessons in the block, the pervasive use of solely teacher-centered lessons, such as note-taking and lectures was observed. Teachers frequently plan and implement formative assessments. However, the assessments are not always used to adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student. In some content areas, teachers were observed using a formative assessment to adapt instruction. A math teacher checked student learning from a review sheet; she spent the next portion of the class addressing the areas where students indicated difficulty, delaying the start of a test. In an English class, students were working independently in groups on grammar. As the teacher moved around the room checking student progress, she noticed a group of students having difficulty; she then modified her plan, spending more time addressing that

component of the lesson. A Spanish teacher asked her students to answer questions on the white board

and then read their responses aloud to the class. Based on the responses, the teacher either spent more

time on finding the correct answer or pronunciation or moved on. Other instances of the use of

formative assessment were observed in art, chemistry, and English classes. It should be noted however,

that these were occasional examples of formative assessment being used to modify instruction. Most

assessments took the form of exit tickets, pre-tests, oral questioning, journal writing, and worksheets.

The lesson plans provided and the visiting committees classroom observations did not indicate a

deliberate use of formative assessment to modify instruction. A little more than half of the teachers

report using strategic differentiation to meet the needs of all students. A science teacher gave students

various options of how to demonstrate knowledge about earth cycles. An English teacher gave students

multiple ways to show understanding of vocabulary words.   In an English class that included special

education students, the teacher provided an alternative activity to achieve the lesson's objective.

Teachers also reported that modifications are done for students with IEPs, students on 504 plans and

ELL students. Most teachers purposefully organize group learning activities designed to engage

students in vigorous learning and to assist students in collaborating. Teachers reported pairing

successful students with struggling students or grouping students with like abilities, work ethic, or

behavior when the teachers deemed those groupings to be most appropriate. In the technology

education department, students are grouped in an effort to build teamwork and interpersonal skills. In

an English class groups are based on personal interests, reading levels, and perceived needs. Other

times students are grouped randomly or on student choice. A majority of teachers provide additional

support and alternative strategies within the classroom setting. This support is corroborated by a

majority of parents. Teachers employ many methods of additional supports for students: modified tests,

study hall passes, learning accommodations, individual counseling, one-on-one instruction, word banks,

simplifying instructions, rewriting assignments, graphic organizers, extra practice, online resources,

specific note cards, resubmission of work and alternative texts. Many teachers offer extra-help before

and after school sessions, however many students report that these sessions are often ineffective. When all teachers regularly use formative assessment to modify instruction and to employ instructional strategies, such as strategic differentiation, purposeful grouping, additional support and alternative instruction in the classroom, maximum student achievement will occur. (self-study, teacher interviews, lesson plans, student interviews, parent interviews)

Teachers inconsistently utilize individual reflection or collaboration with peers using student achievement data, examining student work, using feedback, examining current research or engaging in professional discourse to improve their instructional practices**.** Teachers are contractually required to meet after school with peers three times a month for curriculum/data meetings, department meetings, and faculty meetings. However, teachers report that NEASC preparation has recently replaced monthly faculty meetings. The curriculum/data meetings, which at one time were used to analyze data, have evolved into common planning time with little discussion about curriculum or data analysis. Department meetings are inconsistent in their use of time to analyze data from quarterly, mid-term and final exams, and to review student work. Curriculum coordinators review CAPT results and other data, but it is unclear how that information is communicated to teachers and is used to direct instruction. Teachers reported using common assessments to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of instruction. There is no formal process to review student work. Most teachers ask for student feedback and report making adjustments based on that feedback. A variety of feedback methods are employed: student assessments of teaching through surveys and mid- and end-of-course evaluations, daily surveys, journal entries, a monthly letter to the teacher, written feedback reports, and course design surveys. However, few teachers seek or receive parent feedback. Most parent feedback comes in the form of email requests about preferential seating or information about personal issues or specific learning needs. A few teachers expressed frustration that their requests for parent feedback were not heeded. Approximately half of the teachers occasionally examine current research. The research teachers have examined is

found in current educational publications and journals. Teachers have read research by Charlotte

Danielson, Daniel Pink, Robert Marzano, Harry Wong, Carol Divorek, Malcomb Gladwell and Hill and

Flynn. Topics examined include SRBI/RTI, differentiated instruction, brain development, and guided

practice. Teachers have access to PD360, a professional development website. Numerous videos are

available which are directly related to the delivery of instruction. Topics include assessment, classroom

instruction, classroom management, differentiation, PLCs, curriculum integration and technology

integration. The website has a wall posting feature on which teachers can participate in professional

discourse with their peers, although not all teachers use this feature.   Teachers also watch PD360 videos

during department meetings and engage in professional discourse with their fellow department members

about the topic of the video. PD 360 gave one teacher an effective formative assessment/self-

assessment idea to gauge student learning. Students self-assessed their understanding of a lesson by

identifying their place on a target.„Students' achievement of the school's 21st century learning

expectations will be improved as teachers individually and collaboratively, analyze data from formative

and summative assessments, formally review student work, request and utilize parent and student

feedback, examine current research and engage in professional discourse on a more consistent basis.

(self-study, instruction committee survey, teacher interviews)

All teachers are adult learners and reflective practitioners who maintain their content expertise in

content-specific instructional practices**.** Numerous teachers belong to professional organizations such as

the New England Council for Social Studies, the Connecticut Science Teachers Association, the Council

of Language Teachers, and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Teachers regularly

attend professional conferences; for example, a majority of math teachers recently attended the National

Council of Teachers of Mathematics Conference, some English teachers attended the NCTE Conference

and were trained in the Connecticut Writing Project by the University of Connecticut. A few teachers

have read current publications by noted educational experts and subscribe to professional journals.

Teachers are able to reflect on professional practice through PD360 response questions, in department meetings after collectively watching a PD360 video, and through informal discussions with peers. According to the Connecticut Department of Education, 86.5 percent of RHS teachers has a Master's degree or higher, which is above the state average of 82.1 percent.   Because teachers at RHS are reflective practitioners who maintain their content expertise and collaborate on content-specific instructional practices in order to meet the learning needs of all their students, the learning communities are enriched and students have increased opportunities to meet the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, instruction committee survey, teacher interviews)

Commendations:

- The authentic learning opportunities that are employed in many of the elective classes
- The varied professional development videos available on PD360
- The two cross-disciplinary, co-taught courses offered to students
- The effective use of the minimal technology available by the teachers for delivery of Instruction
- The agriculture education, art, English, health, math, science, social studies, and technology education departments provided lesson plans that engaged students in active and self-directed learning indicating that this is happening in many of the school's core content and elective areas.
- Teachers regularly attend professional conferences

Recommendations:

- Develop and implement a process to ensure an increase in instructional strategies which support higher order thinking skills, inquiry, problem solving, cross disciplinary learning, engaging students in self assessment and reflection, and the integration of technology
- Incorporate student-centered, authentic, and differentiated teaching strategies in all classes

- Ensure that modifications are provided appropriately to meet the needs of all students in every learning situation

- Ensure that all teachers use formative assessment to modify their instruction as a result of the data derived from the assessments

- Develop and implement a protocol for examining student work that results in teacher reflection about instruction, higher expectations of students in each classroom and the delivery of a challenging curriculum for all students

- Develop and implement a protocol for obtaining and using parent feedback to address the learning needs of students

- Develop and implement a systematic program for obtaining and using student feedback to revise instructional practices

4 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.

Assessment of Student Learning

Rockville High School professional staff does not employ a formal process, based on the analytical rubrics, to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. Committees to develop these school-wide rubrics were in place during the 2012-2013 school year. Comprised of teachers, curriculum coordinators, and administrators, these committees generated five different analytical rubrics with the goal of measuring each of the learning expectations listed in the Rockville High School's Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations. These rubrics were created and sent to the leadership team for approval with the plan to disseminate them to the staff for voting. The rubrics were not presented to the staff. The Endicott survey showed that 23 percent of teachers was using school-wide rubrics, but there was no evidence of this since the rubrics were never presented to the staff to use, and further evidence suggests that those being used are the school-wide rubrics generated for the previous NEASC accreditation visit and are not aligned with the current core values and beliefs on learning. When Rockville High School consistently employs the school-wide rubrics in the classroom, it will be able to measure, analyze, individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. (teacher interviews, panel presentation, parent meetings, self-study, Endicott survey)

Rockville High School does not communicate individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families and to the school community. Individual student academic progress is reported through the use of midterm reports and report cards. These are communicated eight times per year. Students and parents also have the ability to follow individual progress through the use of the iPass system. Many teachers report that iPass is updated frequently. However, this communication does not include progress toward the school's learning expectations. The

report cards communicate number grades and have the potential to include teacher comments as well. When surveyed, 69.1 percent of parents reports that they are provided with a formal report which explains their child's progress toward the learning expectations; however, there was no evidence of this communication. Commendations, performances, scores on standardized assessments, and awards are made known to the public through use of the local newspaper and the school website. In addition, announcements are made to the school community through the loud speaker and each week an email is sent to the staff which includes information from each department. Although communication systems exist for course specific grades, they do not communicate individual student progress to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. Implementation of a formal process to measure student progress to achieve the learning expectations, will result in the data to be communicated to students and the community and enable this important information to adjust curriculum and instruction. (teachers, self-study, Endicott survey)

Professional staff does not collect, disaggregate, or analyze data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. Based on the Endicott survey, 50.5 percent of the staff believes that they do use data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. Conversely, the panel presentations, interviews with members of the staff and superintendent, and the self-study stated that there was a lack of data analysis. Using the CAPT test, data is collected in 13 categories including male, female, African American, Hispanic, Caucasian, Asian, Native American, free and reduced lunch, full price lunch, special education, non-special education, and English language learners (ELL) and non-ELL, but there was no formal process in place to analyze this data with teachers, to disseminate this information, or to use this data to revise curriculum, instruction, or assessment. Additionally, data from common and teacher generated assessments is rarely used to drive changes in curriculum and instruction and to respond to the different levels in student achievement.   When the professional staff employs a process to collect, disaggregate, and analyze data of inequities in student achievement, they will be better

positioned to address these differences and to make the necessary changes to their instructional practices that will promote higher levels of student achievement. (Endicott survey, panel presentations, interviews, self-study)

Prior to each unit of study, many teachers communicate to students applicable unit-specific learning goals to be assessed but most do not communicate specific 21st century learning expectations. Teachers display lesson objectives on the board and distribute grading criteria prior to the start of a project or assessment. Although the objectives are in some cases related to the 21st century learning expectations, they do not seem designed for that purpose. In addition, many teachers assess learning goals only through the use of rubrics. Sixty-two percent of students feels that they are aware of the learning expectations prior to the start of a unit, but the evidence suggests that these expectations are more related to the unit-specific learning goals as opposed to school-wide learning expectations. The consistent use of 21st century learning expectations, infused as a part of the regular classroom objectives, will ensure students are more familiar with and aware of the expectations which will help them make progress toward these goals. (classroom observations, Endicott survey, teacher interviews)

Prior to summative assessments, teachers frequently provide students with corresponding rubrics. During teacher interviews, student interviews, classroom visits, and exercises to review student work, it was clear that thorough analytical rubrics were provided to students at the beginning of class activities, projects, and summative assessments. Generally, the rubrics clearly described the requirements necessary to achieve excellence on an assignment or an assessment. There are a number of examples of this school-wide application, including a geometry lesson on Pythagorean Theorem, agricultural laboratory projects, music performance in band, photography projects, and a creative sewing project. Continued use of analytical rubrics provided prior to summative assessments will ensure that students

have all of the information and requirements to succeed. (teacher interviews, student work samples, classroom visits)

At Rockville High School, some teachers employ a variety of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments. A strong majority, 87.2 percent, of the teachers feels that they use a variety of assessment strategies in their teaching. Quizzes, tests, essays, lab reports, and projects are among the most common assessments that were gathered from the departments. Teachers report that they monitor student work in progress and gather informal information based on daily classroom observations, although evidence suggests that they do not always use the information to adapt instruction. Some departments report that they provide the students with exemplars and most distribute rubrics prior to the start of a project. When surveyed, 74.9 percent of students feels that teachers assess them in a variety of methods of assessments, and 52.9 percent of parents feels that teachers accomplish this as well. A review of submitted student work, showed that there was clear evidence that students were provided with an opportunity to revise and resubmit their work. Midterm and final exams are also used to demonstrate proficiency and most departments employ common assessments. When all teachers consistently employ a range of assessment strategies to assess student learning, students will have a variety of ways and more opportunities to demonstrate progress and understanding. (Endicott survey, self-study, teacher interview, classroom observation, student panel)

In some areas, teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments. The ninth grade core teachers are provided with common planning time. During this planning time, teachers are developing common assessments, aligning curriculum, and some classes are making use of assessments, projects, and classroom activities that are in common. Also, during this common planning time, teachers are reviewing data from these assessments, projects, and activities to refine future assessments. The

mathematics department has an intervention specialist who uses a program called ALECKS to track student progress on assessments in real time. Each response determines the difficulty of the next question in the assessment. There was evidence that this was increasing student success rates in the general education math courses across the board as a result of this program. The chemistry department was able to generate common assessments, laboratory exercises, and classroom activities as well as to review data from these assessments to drive instruction and successive assessments. This was a result of having common planning time. Almost all classes are moving toward common midterm and final exams. The extent to which the data from these particular assessments is reviewed with a formal procedure to revise assessments is not by design, however. Fifty-five percent of the teachers formally meet to discuss and improve formative and summative assessment strategies. Assessments will be more effectively used to inform and adapt instruction for improved student learning when formal processes are in place in all areas for teachers to collaboratively create, analyze, and revise assessments. (teacher interviews, panel presentation, student work, Endicott survey)

Teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students have the opportunity to revise and improve their work. When surveyed, 66.2 percent of parents feels that the teachers assess work in a reasonable amount of time and provide feedback which is helpful in revising and improving assignments. Sixty four point nine percent of the students feel that their work is assessed and corrected in a reasonable amount of time. However that percentage drops to 58 percent of students who feels that the suggestions and feedbacks help to improve school work. Sample student work demonstrated that the majority of departments do provide some written feedback. Some of the departments demonstrated that revisions were allowed. At Rockville High School, it is not a common policy that students are allowed to revise all work, however, in teacher interviews, many teachers stated that revisions were sometimes granted on a case-by-case basis due to poor performance or absences as opposed to lack of effort. Through classroom visits, it was observed that teachers offer positive reinforcement and immediate

verbal feedback. Teachers report that they offer timely feedback in the following ways: checking for understanding, providing exemplars, holding conferences, and encouraging students to assess their own work.   The specific, timely, and corrective feedback presented to students, and the opportunity to revise and improve their work increases students' opportunities to demonstrate progress toward and achieve the school's learning expectations. (Endicott survey, student work, teacher interviews, classroom observations)

Teachers sometimes use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning**.** Through the use of checklists, chapter reviews, study guides, mini-lessons, exit slips, check-in/check-out methods, and rubrics, teachers consistently observe student performance. On occasion, they use these observations to change what and how they deliver their instruction. For example, in a sophomore English class, a teacher observed that students were struggling with an activity. The teacher then switched from individual work to whole class instruction to provide some additional guidance before allowing the students to return to independent work. The English department reports that they are working with Manchester Community College (MCC) to better prepare students for introductory college courses. Throughout the year, within department meetings, teachers review student performance and discuss what can be done to help them increase their performance.   While it appears that teachers use a variety of assessments that are formative in nature, they do not always use these to inform and adapt their instruction. The increased use by all teachers in the use formative assessments to continually and consistently adapt their instruction will provide students the opportunity to improve their learning experiences in the classroom.   (self-study, classroom observation, panel presentation)

Teachers and administrators do not have a formal process to examine evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice**.** Many teachers review student work on an individual basis, however, this work is not consistently used to improve the instructional

practice or curriculum. The *Greater Expectations* document spells out a plan to revise and review curriculum, but there is little evidence to suggest that student work is used as a tool to revise and review the curriculum. Grade nine core classes have a designated time to create, implement, and review common assessments in classes. The extent to which this drives revision of curriculum is limited, but many ninth grade teachers suggested that the data from these assessments is used quite often to drive instructional change specifically for freshmen core classes. It was not evident that there is a formal process for this work. Twelfth grade English classes that were the MCC courses use the data from the "challenge essay" to drive instructional and curricular changes throughout the school year. The work is done, but there is no protocol for this work. There is no evidence that individual or school-wide progress toward achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations is collected, so analyzing this information is impossible for the staff. Evidence of a formal process to use, disseminate, and review standardized testing data to drive the revision of curriculum and instruction is infrequently used. The middle school does test outgoing eighth graders in several areas. The eighth grade students are tested for *MAZE*, *GATES*, and *6 traits of writing rubric, CBAs, and Smarter Balanced* data. This data is sent to the high school and is used by select groups. Most notably, the reading teachers use this data for student placement in the *Read 180* program. The extent to which information from sending schools is used to drive curriculum and instruction is limited to the reading consultant. Rockville High School does not collect data from surveys of current students or alumni for the purpose of revising curriculum or instruction practices. The one exception to this is the agricultural program. The agricultural program uses a five-year follow up survey. When Rockville High School analyzes data from a variety of sources, both individually and collaboratively, and uses this information to drive curriculum and instruction revision, instructional practices will benefit and will be more targeted to the needs of the student body. (teacher interviews, *Greater Expectations* document, self-study, meetings with curriculum coordinators)

Grading and reporting practices are not regularly reviewed nor revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. Forty-one percent of the teachers reports that they believe school-wide grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised. In addition, 60 percent of the parents believe that teachers' grading practices are aligned with the school's beliefs about learning. It was apparent, however, during teacher interviews, panel presentations, and observations that teachers revise their grading practices on an individual basis, and there is little commonality between and among teachers of different levels, different classes, or different grades, except in the ninth grade core subjects. The *Greater Expectations* document has in place a formal review process of curriculum, but grading and reporting practices are not mentioned in this five-year formal curriculum review cycle. Once the school develops and employs a formal method for regularly reviewing and revising grading and reporting practices, the school can be sure that these practices align with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. (Endicott survey, teacher interviews, panel presentation, classroom observations)

Commendations:

- The use of the iPass system to allow students and teachers to measure academic progress
- The teachers' communication of unit-specific learning goals prior to the start and throughout the duration of the unit
- The collaborative nature of the 9th grade core subjects to review assessments and to improve curriculum and instruction for students
- The teachers who currently employ a broad range of assessments as a routine part of their lessons
- There was clear evidence that students were provided with an opportunity to revise and resubmit their work

Recommendations:

- Develop and implement a process to formally assess individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning goals using school-wide analytic rubrics

- Develop and implement a process to communicate individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families

- Develop and implement a process to communicate the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community

- Collect, disseminate, and analyze data to respond to inequities in student achievement

- Consistently utilize the 21st century learning goals to supplement student learning prior to units

- Develop opportunities and aprocess for teachers of all grades and common courses to have formal time to collaborate on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments

- Develop and implement a formal process to examine evidence of student learning with the purpose of revising curriculum and instructional practices

- Develop and utilize a formal process to review grading and reporting practices to ensure alignment with the school's core values, beliefs and learning expectations

Support Standard

5 School Culture and Leadership

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

1. The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.

2. The school is equitable, inclusive, and fosters heterogeneity where every student over the course of the high school experience is enrolled in a minimum of one heterogeneously grouped core course (English/language arts, social studies, math, science, or world languages).

3. There is a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

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

5. School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning.

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

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

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

9. Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.

10. Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning.

11. The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

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

School Culture and Leadership

The Rockville High School community does not consistently build a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning that results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all. The Endicott survey results reveal 45.9 percent of the faculty believes the school culture is safe and supportive. Physical altercations account for some of the unease. Parents report worrying that the classroom culture is disrespectful and that both teachers and students are disrespected. The school fosters responsibility by informing students of school policies and procedures including behavioral expectations in the *Rockville High School Student/Parent Handbook*. The student handbook, which must be carried by students at all times, is included in a student agenda book which also enables students to keep track of assignments, schedules, and due dates. However, a review of the handbook by the visiting committee indicates that consequences are undefined which could lead to a lack of consistency. For example, the consequences for a major offense such as fighting indicate a suspension, but there is no explicit amount of days. However, a relatively minor offense like an unauthorized area violation is met with an explicit one-day suspension upon a third offense. There are twenty-five offenses listed that may result in a suspension on pages 37-38, but there are no explicitly defined length of the consequences. Furthermore, there is no defined attendance policy beyond teachers being responsible for providing a consequence to students who are tardy to class. In reviewing the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 conduct reports, there are clear indications of increased discipline infractions. For example, in terms of consequences, there has been a 44 percent increase in in-school suspensions and 67 percent increase in out-of-school suspensions. Also, in terms of overall offenses, there has been a 5 percent increase in major offenses but a 251 percent increase in minor offenses. Particular offenses that were noted by students and faculty include skipping class (up 16 percent), insubordination (up 99 percent) and battery/assault (up 42 percent). When a major issue arises in the school, the principal

frequently addresses the faculty and the community. Parents enjoy weekly news from the school but are

disappointed by the loss of a longer monthly newsletter. Faculty members worry that there is not enough

communication from the principal and that after significant events there is communication without

action. Policies and procedures are often reinforced through regular meetings of the advisory groups.

Despite these efforts, the Endicott survey indicates only 38.5 percent of the faculty believes the RHS

school culture supports independent student learning. Shared ownership in a positive school climate

that encourages respect, awareness, and tolerance is fostered at RHS through such organizations as the

Gay Straight Alliance (GSA), Students Seeking New Achievements Positively (SSNAP), and the Link

Crew. Furthermore, posters throughout the building demonstrate involvement and student participation

in school and community events. Formal recognition of students through programs such as the Rock

Stars and the academic and athletic awards ceremonies promote student pride. Additionally, school

safety is enhanced through both the building-based Vernon Youth Services Counselor and the RHS

resource officer. There was a mandated cyclical replacement of the past school resource officer.

However, the current school resource officer has already begun to make connections to the school

community. Related survey data reveals 60.2 percent of all students feels safe at Rockville High School.

Other data related to school pride reveals 67 percent of seniors feels the teachers at RHS respect them,

although only 58.2 percent believes their teachers are concerned about their learning. In contrast, 78

percent of the staff members feels that they support students in assuming responsibility for their

learning, while 86.6 percent of parents feels that the school encourages students to take on that

responsibility. As indicated, the school community at RHS has attempted to support an environment that

fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations;

however, the evidence suggests the school has not reached that goal. When the school identifies and

develops a plan to address the upturn in disciplinary infractions which has reduced the school-wide

feeling of safety and pride, and involves students, parents and faculty in a full review of the student

handbook, the school community will be ensured a safe, positive, and supportive school culture. (self-study, parents, teachers, students, Endicott survey).

Rockville High 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 class (English/language arts, social studies, mathematics, and science). Students at RHS are enrolled in at least one core heterogeneously grouped class over the course of their high school experience. Students meet this indicator in their civics class, a heterogeneously grouped and required course for graduation that was implemented in the 2011-2012 school year. Students typically take this course during their sophomore year. In addition to this core class, students are required to take other heterogeneously grouped classes in non-core subject areas including office applications, health, and physical education. According to the Endicott survey, 57.1 percent of the student body agrees that students have a number of opportunities to take courses in which students of varying ability levels are enrolled. Additionally, there has been a recent de-leveling of all grade 9 and 10 core courses by eliminating the general level and by maintaining the college prep and honors levels. Parents worry that heterogeneous classes have not resulted in a rise in academic challenge, and teachers report that they have not seen a distinct change toward a more unified student culture. Because RHS has implemented at least one heterogeneously grouped core class it has begun to foster an equitable, inclusive learning experience for its students. (self-study, teachers, parents, Endicott survey)

Rockville High School has an ongoing program in place with the identified purpose of assuring that all students have an adult, besides their school counselor, who knows that student well; however, it is evident that there is limited formal structure to this program which has resulted in inadequate success. RHS implemented an advisory program in 2010-11, but recently adjusted its structure. The program now meets for a thirty-minute period every other week. All students participate in the program,

including Life Skills and Total Alternative Learning Center (TALC) students. However, many teachers indicate that the purpose of the program is unclear. At the start of the 2012-2013 school year, teachers were provided an advisory curriculum but it was replaced in the fall months. Currently, it is reported that the administration provides individual activities to the teacher, however these activities typically are identified the night before or on the morning of advisory days. Individual teachers have little input in these lessons. Several teachers noted that they are asked to have their students input grades into Naviance or complete online surveys during advisory, but they have no technology available in their meeting space to support this initiative. This has resulted in teachers requesting students to complete the online advisory work at home, and students report that they rarely complete these assignments. Teachers and students both report that they feel that advisory could be utilized in a more effective manner to address larger school-wide issues specifically related to school culture. Meanwhile, the Endicott survey indicates that only 36.8 percent of parents is aware of the school's advisory program. By designing a more effective advisory program that has meaningful input from teachers, students and parents, RHS will have the vehicle to foster significant relationships between advisors and advisees. (teachers, students, Endicott survey)

Rockville High School administrators and faculty acknowledge the importance of professional discourse, reflection and inquiry through support for professional development; however, constituents at all levels agree that time committed to professional development has been limited significantly over the past few years. The current district-wide delivery system for professional development, *PD 360*, has yielded little impact on the school. Teachers cite reasons for limited improvement that include videos that are out of date or more appropriate for the elementary level. Remaining professional development efforts occur primarily at the department level and include recent efforts by the English language arts department to address the Common Core, the special education department's introduction to writing strategies from Kansas University, and the math department's work with the University of Connecticut

to increase the achievement of students who have been identified as working below grade level. An additional training opportunity for a technology instructor resulted in his participation at the International Technology Education & Engineering Association Conference, and his instruction led to the recent development of a STEM laboratory. Nevertheless, opportunities for professional discourse have been limited by a reduction in available time. Following an agreement with the union, faculty meetings have been cut in exchange for teacher participation in the advisory program. Furthermore, most in-service days for the past year have been committed to preparation for the decennial visit. Thus, all levels of the district including the school board, superintendent, building administration and faculty members cite limited time as a cause for decreased growth in instructional practice and, in particular, the failure of the school to complete any meaningful curriculum development. In the past, much of this work was accomplished during the summer, but teachers report that the district has been reluctant to support such efforts in the past year. Instead, the school board has recommended four full in-service days and seven early release days in the 2013-14 school calendar. When RHS creates a formal implementation plan that is focused on the enactment of timely and meaningful professional development, members of the faculty and staff will be able to provide meaningful and effective instruction to all members of the student body. (teachers, School Leadership Committee, self-study)

Rockville High School leaders infrequently use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning. The evaluation process does not play an integral role in instructional improvement, particularly in the case of veteran teachers. Overwhelming testimony from the teaching staff indicates that due to recent changes in building leadership, the school's past evaluation system is no longer followed. In all teacher discussions, only two teachers indicated that they had been formally evaluated in the past year. The remaining teachers noted occasional walk-throughs by administrators and central office curriculum coordinators, but no formal feedback on teacher performance was provided. A teacher reported that brief check-ins are in some cases dependent on the

strength of the wireless Internet in different parts of the building, and as such, observations were occasionally interrupted or cancelled. Many faculty members are aware of the initiative of Instructional Rounds, brief informal visits with feedback. However, very few reported actual participation in the process. The effective implementation of the Connecticut System for Educator Evaluation and Development will provide RHS with an evaluative system that has a direct influence on classroom practice and a positive impact on the learning of all students at the school. (teachers, central office administration, self-study)

The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of most students. Rockville High School is organized on a block schedule of eight eighty-four minute blocks with four blocks meeting on each of two alternating days. The majority of faculty reports that it is in favor of the block schedule. Science teachers are able to complete entire labs, and teachers across nearly all departments report that the extended period allows for in-depth instruction and a variety of activities within an individual class period. Teachers report that the block schedule has been in place for approximately ten years. However, none of the teachers interviewed had knowledge of a formal committee in charge of reviewing or revising the schedule. There is formal time set aside after school for faculty collaboration in the form of department and NEASC meetings, in addition to half days of school when the remaining hours are set aside for independent professional development. Teachers report that there is an appetite for more frequent opportunities to have interdepartmental conversations, but that mandated trainings prevent the time for such interaction. Faculty meetings were recently discontinued in exchange for faculty participation in advisory. A student reported that many seniors organize their schedule such that during their final semester, they have two free blocks, and that they tailor their schedule so that they are able to arrive at school late or leave school early, and a faculty member admitted that in this way the block schedule enables a type of "brain drain" or "checking out" where some of the students who have met the requirements of the school no

longer have a presence in the building. Additionally, several observed classrooms spent the first twenty

minutes of the block engaged in sustained silent reading. Teachers reported that in some classes the

block system was essentially a way for homework to be completed in class, as, otherwise, homework is

not completed by the students. Additionally, a number of students report that not all faculty members

deliver instruction in a way that is compatible with eighty-four minute periods, and they frequently felt

bored or frustrated by extended direct instruction and a lack of instructional variety within discrete

periods. The near unanimous support for the block schedule is a sign that faculty are comfortable with

and accustomed to planning and delivering curriculum in extended periods. As questions about

professional development, professional collaboration, and instruction arise, small or large changes

regarding the schedule may be an option to consider. The current schedule enables instances of in-depth

instruction, some opportunities for collaboration, and addresses the learning needs of students, but with

a purposeful review of the effectiveness of the schedule, the school may identify greater opportunities to

enhance instruction and embed professional development. (teachers, students, self-study)

Rockville High School has regulated class size to ensure that they are supporting the learning needs of

individual students. A review of the 2012-2013 master schedule indicates that the total enrollment of

only three class sections, excluding band courses, that are currently being offered exceeds twenty-five

students. In fact, because the majority of classes has an enrollment in the high teens, many teachers

report that they have a reasonable total student load of approximately 100 students. Results of the

Endicott survey further speak to an appropriate class size level as 72 percent of students surveyed

indicates that class sizes in their courses are reasonable. However, the school has seen recent changes in

staffing as the school board noted that there was a reduction of one teacher in each of the core subject

areas last year and a further reduction of one social studies teacher this year. The appropriate class size

and student load provides teachers and students an optimal learning environment for students and

teachers to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, master schedule, teacher, Endicott survey)

The principal, working with other building leaders, has limited success in providing instructional leadership in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectation. Despite prevalent visual displays (posters) and print materials (within the handbooks) there is an inconsistent knowledge of and commitment to the school's core values and beliefs among the faculty and student body. Many faculty members knew the core values and articulated the ways in which they integrated them into their curriculum individually, but others could not explain the ROCK acronym and felt that the core values were arbitrarily chosen and not yet a fundamental or important part of school culture. The principal does lead with the core values in mind. His recent investigation of failure rates and initiatives to reduce failure is clearly connected to the core value of knowledge. Faculty members report that the principal is readily available both formally (through scheduled meetings) and informally (via appointment and email) but are frustrated by the lack of faculty meetings as another venue for communicating and strategizing with peers and leadership. Under the principal's leadership, the school highlights many types of success. Hallway installations celebrate artistic, athletic, and academic performance, and there is a program in place (Rock Cards) to specifically celebrate moments when students embody school values. Students can demonstrate an awareness of school values (they can refer to ROCK and associated slogans) but they do not yet demonstrate any apparent commitment to those values in a visible, organized, school-wide instructional capacity. Endicott survey data indicates nearly 62 percent of the student body believes the principal is clear about what he wants the school to accomplish for all of the students, while only 46 percent of the staff agrees that the principal and other school-based administrators provide instructional leadership that is consistent with the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Students and faculty both report the importance of the core values, but do not see connections between the chosen core values and the actual school culture. As the principal develops

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and implements effective school-wide programs and curriculum regarding the core values that are

consistently present in all classes at the school, the school will ensure that they have a set of values and

a school culture that coincide. (teachers, Endicott survey, school tour)

Teachers, students, and parents are involved in defined roles that affect decision-making but their

reduced involvement promotes limited responsibility and ownership. At Rockville High School,

opportunities exist for parent, student, and teacher involvement in the decision-making process.

However, despite some of the opportunities for parent participation, the actual percentage of parents

who are actively involved in decision-making processes at the school is quite low. Multiple surveys

have been and continue to be used for the purpose of gathering input regarding school policies,

programs, and initiatives. Yet, parental input has been limited. For example, only 68 parents participated

in the Endicott survey, but the school endeavors to get greater participation for parents, students and

teachers. For example, as the advisory program was being designed and implemented, input from

student leadership (Student Council) was incorporated into the topics to be used, and an important

aspect of the advisor/advisee program is the monthly feedback that students give to their advisors.

Teachers were also surveyed to determine the topics they would be comfortable discussing in these

small groups. A majority of teachers felt that in this and similar situations, they were asked for input, but

that their ideas had little influence on the actual implementation. As another example of gathering input,

the superintendent sent a survey to parents and students for the purpose of gathering feedback on the

activities and potential benefits of the 2011 first day of school for grade nine students. Furthermore, a

team of administrators, teachers, parents and students participates and plays an active role in the hiring

process for RHS administrators. Additionally, the RHS parent group meets every two months with

members of the administrative team. In regards to parental involvement, the Endicott survey reveals

57.4 percent of parents believes that they have opportunities to be involved in important decisions made

at the school. Parents report that while some of their suggestions and ideas are considered, actual

changes are prevented by the school's budget. They see some of the limitations in the school as being

the result of community-wide voting preferences. Despite these opportunities for involvement,

according to the Endicott survey only 21 percent of faculty believes teachers, students, and parents are

meaningfully involved in decision making to promote an atmosphere of responsibility and ownership,

and only 34.7 percent of students believes they have input in important decisions made at school. A

number of faculty reports that all changes at RHS happen from "the top down." There is widespread

frustration that teacher input is solicited, but that the inflexibility of school changes related to NEASC

and adherence to the Connecticut Standards prevent them from having any agency or influence. Faculty

appear to take ownership of and responsibility for their own classrooms and programs, including

superlative faculty led programs in creative writing, band, and Green Team, but there is little evidence

of faculty members who are actively fighting for a more defined role in decision making process. By

increasing administrative efforts to foster a stronger sense of community and shared decision making

among students, faculty, and parents, all constituents will have a shared sense of ownership and

responsibility to the school. (Endicott survey, teacher interviews, parent interviews, and student

interviews)

While there are examples of recent success and some currently planned initiatives that would promote

teacher efforts to have an impact on student learning, changes in the school structure and an overall lack

of morale have resulted in limited school-wide growth. While instructors in the Total Alternative

Learning Center speak to autonomy to make decisions that improve their students' achievement, most

teachers indicate that there are very few opportunities to directly impact school-wide change. This is a

result of structural changes that have reduced faculty meetings, disbanded formal data teams and limited

common planning time to content-specific freshman team teachers only. In addition, a recent effort to

implement a system of Instructional Rounds, a shared process of instructional review involving teachers

and administrators, has not come to fruition. Thus, while teachers acknowledge that collaborative efforts are necessary to advance the school, they believe that there is no formalized structure to support such success. Teachers speak fondly of past institutions like the School Effectiveness Committee, a long disbanded committee, as examples of methods to promote effective teacher leadership. Still, there are examples of individual teachers seizing the initiative to advance student achievement. For example, one technology teacher, in coordination with the district grant writer, accessed grant funds that resulted in targeted participation in STEM training. Following this training, the teacher led an effort to develop a full STEM classroom and rightfully earned recognition as the Connecticut Technology and Engineering and Education Association High School Teacher of the Year. Additionally, there is a small collection of teachers working as a faculty-led School Climate Committee with the hopes of improving the overall culture of the school. Unfortunately, participation in this committee has waned as teachers have been committed to ongoing NEASC responsibilities, but there is enthusiasm to revitalize this committee in the coming months. When the faculty and administration of Rockville High School develop opportunities to empower faculty-led initiatives, classroom-based reforms in instructional practice and curriculum they will advance student achievement and school-wide growth. (self-study, teachers, facility tour)

It is evident that that there has been limited collaboration between and among the building principal, superintendent and school board as the school has worked to implement and embed its 21st century learning expectations. Examples of collaboration include the recent adoption of a school-based proposal for a community service graduation requirement by the school board and the efforts of the Curriculum Sub-Committee of the school board to adopt the school's newly proposed elective course offerings. Nevertheless, ongoing evidence and faculty and staff testimony indicate that there is no meaningful sense of collaboration among the parties. This is reflected as less than half of the staff (45.9 percent) indicated on the Endicott survey that those constituents have collaborated in the process of achieving

learning expectations. Furthermore, while the school has identified its 21st century learning expectations and the school board has approved those expectations, teachers have indicated that there has been no follow-up to approve ongoing implementation of those expectations. In particular, the school-wide rubrics used to assess student proficiency in the 21st century expectations were designed by faculty members and submitted to administration for review with no further information being communicated to the faculty at any level of leadership. Therefore, there has been no movement to align curriculum or to adjust instruction to reflect the core beliefs of the school. Also, while it is apparent that central office leadership is aware of the school's 21st century expectations, there is no concerted effort to oversee the implementation of these expectations in curriculum development, evaluation or assessment. As Rockville High School expands and solidifies on the collaborative efforts between the school board, superintendent and principal that resulted in the approval of the 21st century expectations the school will become more reflective and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. (Endicott survey, teachers, school board)

It is evident that the majority of Rockville High School staff and parents perceive that the school board and superintendent fail to provide the building principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. The Endicott survey data indicates that only 38.5% percent of staff members and 45.6 percent of parents agree that the principal is granted sufficient decision-making authority to lead. The superintendent acknowledged that the recent decision-making model for the district has become a systemic model which may have resulted in the reduction of individual building principal autonomy. Teacher interviews indicate that staff feels that building-based initiatives have been delayed by the superintendent with little explanation and that they receive little communication from central office. Teachers noted that the recent appointment of an assistant superintendent has yet to be communicated to the district faculty. Furthermore, staff members stated that the principal's past efforts to communicate with parents through newsletters has been usurped by the superintendent resulting in no established

regular communication with parents. When the Rockville High School administrative team works together and in tandem, the principal, with sufficient decision-making authority, will be able to provide guidance and support to the school staff to implement the necessary initiatives to advance improved practice and student achievement. (Endicott survey, teachers, parents, superintendent)

Commendations:

- The class sizes that are conducive to supporting student achievement and growth
- The available heterogeneously grouped course that all students must take
- The implementation of a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) system to encourage positive school culture
- The creation of a formal structure for a program in which all students have one adult who knows them well

Recommendations:

- Develop and implement a plan to address the increase of conduct infractions to ensure a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive school culture
- Develop a purposeful curriculum for the advisory program to ensure a positive impact on students in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations
- Develop and implement a formal plan that has input from all school constituents that leads to timely and meaningful professional development for all staff in assisting them to meet identified needs
- Implement the new Connecticut Educator evaluation system so that teacher observations and evaluations are consistent, equitable and beneficial to teacher growth and success
- Foster an environment that promotes faculty-led initiatives to increase student achievement in

an effort to encourage a sense of ownership and collaboration

- Develop and implement processes to ensure the school board, superintendent , and principal are collaborative, reflective and constructive in achieving gth e school's 21st century learning expectations

- Ensure the principal is provided with sufficient decision-making ability in order
  to lead the school

- Plan and implement professional development that addresses the delivery of instruction in a
  long block

⑥ School Resources for Learning

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7. Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:

- collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations
- provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students
- perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

School Resources for Learning

For the most part, Rockville High School has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Guidance counselors, nurses, and special education personnel make a concerted effort to address the various needs of the student population, including at-risk students, through many programs. For example, in the advisor/advisee program, every student meets regularly with a small group of students and with one teacher once every two weeks. In addition, each student is assigned to a guidance counselor. Another example is the Total Alternative Learning Center (TALC) program, in which students receive help modifying behaviors to make it possible for them to return to their regular school setting. Rockville High School also provides three freshman academies for ninth grade students to provide them with academic support. Other examples include System 44, Read 180, and MAZE. Additional support services are offered to allow the practice of inclusion, ensuring equal access to the curriculum for all students. Services include an English as a second language (ESL) program for English language learners (ELL), school counseling services, school nursing personnel, library/media staff, and a special education department as well as a school psychologist, two social workers, a speech and language instructor, an in-school suspension facilitator, a career center staffed by one full-time and one part-time (.8 FTE) person, a school resource officer, a town truancy officer, and paraprofessionals who work throughout the building. Much concern was expressed by teachers that guidance services focus on pressing, immediate emotional needs of student instead of providing career and college planning and preparation. *When Rockville High School examines how intervention services meet the needs of all students, and utilizes support personnel to assist all student needs, then the support services will be equitable and enable more students at Rockville High School to achieve the 21st*

learning expectations. (parents, school support staff members, school psychologist, school social worker, ELL staff, special education teachers)

The school provides limited information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services. Classroom teachers, administrators, and school counselors regularly contact parents by phone or email or meet in person. In addition, guidance has attempted to conduct evening parent meetings. However, attendance at these meetings has been limited and is insufficient to reach the targeted at-risk population. In contrast, the ELL department utilizes outstanding communication services. For example, all required ELL parent notices are translated using the district-funded TransACT website and mailed to the parents of ELL students. However, this positive communication with families is not consistently practiced throughout the high school. Concerns were expressed about the discontinuation of the monthly newsletter which notified parents of school news and upcoming events. This printed communication was replaced by a weekly email and postings on the school website. However, this type of correspondence requires online access thus providing limited access to information for parents of high school students. Improving school communications will provide all parents with much needed information about support services. (school board, parent meetings, teacher meetings)

Rockville High School support services use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student including iPass software, a comprehensive, integrated browser-based student administrative software program that links counselors, teachers, special education services, library/media, school nurse, students, and their families. School counseling also uses College Board and Naviance for career and college planning, and NovaNet for individual student course recovery. Special education services rely heavily on IEP Direct for Individualized Education Program (IEP) drafting, evaluations, scheduling and more Assistive technologies are used when appropriate. As a result of the

regular use of these integrated technologies, support staff members deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student and thereby support student achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, school support staff, panel presentation)

School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff. Six school counselors meet with students individually and with advisory groups. However, there is not a written formal guidance developmental program in place. Currently, a larger percentage of the guidance counselors' time is taken with students' social/emotional issues. If another mechanism, such as additional collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers, is put into place to address these social/emotional issues, school counselors will have sufficient time to meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career and college counseling. The counseling department gathers assessment data from student grades and attendance, SAT/PSAT and CAPT scores, discipline data, counselor surveys, parent meetings, and school dropout rates. When RHS establishes a formal evaluation procedure using ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, the support services it provides to students will improve, ensuring each student will have better opportunities to achieve the school's 21st learning expectations. (self-study, panel presentations, school support staff)

The school's health services have an adequate number of certified licensed personnel and support staff. There is one full-time nurse and a health aide who works 24 hours per week. In addition, another certified licensed personnel works one day per week. The health care services provided in the nurse's office include, but are not limited to, the administration of medications and medical procedures, the assessment and treatment of acute illnesses or injuries, mandated scoliosis, hearing and vision screening, flu clinics for staff, the monitoring of chronic illness such as diabetes and asthma, and attention to the health and emotional needs of students and staff. The nurse's office also refers students to outside

agencies and services as appropriate. However, while the school clearly offers a wide range of health services, the school has no formal process to evaluate the quality of its health services. When Rockville High School institutes a formal program to use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, the school will improve student health services and ensure that each student has an enhanced opportunity to achieve the school's 21st learning expectations. (self-study, nurse, school support staff, teachers)

Library/media services are partially integrated into the curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified licensed personnel and support staff to provide limited library services**.** The library/media specialist is not actively engaged in curriculum development, but does assist in the implementation of the school's curriculum when the opportunities exist. For example, if sufficient notice is provided when teachers make a request to use the computer lab in the library/media center, the library/media specialist offers to gather resources and prepare pathfinders that support the class and its research activities. Teachers do not always take advantage of this offer. School restructuring has limited opportunities for collaboration between the library/media specialist and classroom teachers. This has also impacted the implementation of the school's information literacy curriculum, thus not all students are provided the opportunity to learn information literacy skills. The library/media center provides a wide range of print and electronic materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum. For example, the library/media specialist creates Wiki space pages with links to appropriate online subject resources. When resources are not available within the library/media center, staff members actively locate and provide resources to teachers and students through a responsive inter-library loan program. Due to testing and other uses of the facility, the library/media center is not always accessible for students and teachers before, during, and after school. The library/media specialist is responsive to students' interest and needs in order to support independent learning. The library/media specialist also invites recommendations and request for materials and makes library purchases based

upon the input of teachers and students. The library/media center collects a variety of assessment data

from surveys conducted through classes, library usage statistics, online forms on the Wiki space page,

parental comments during open houses and any feedback the staff and community provide. Limited

changes have been made, however, in response to this assessment data and the school does not have a

formal evaluation procedure in place to conduct an ongoing assessment program. As changes are made

to fully integrate the library/ media specialist into curriculum development and implementation, develop

a formal program to use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school

community, and limit interruptions to library operations, then the library availability and library/ media

services will ensure that each student receives the support they need to achieve the school's 21st century

learning expectations. (self-study, teacher interviews, panel presentation)

The school support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and English language learners (ELLs) have an adequate

number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who collaborate with all teachers, counselors,

targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning

expectations, to provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students, and to perform ongoing

assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and

ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning experiences. The school serves a total of

944 students including 109 students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs), 20 students with 504

plans and 15 students identified as ELLs. The school support staff providing direct service to these

students includes 13 special education teachers, 22 paraprofessionals who support the special education

program, and an on-site secondary supervisor of special education who coordinates all special education

personnel. Three of the 13 special education teachers service the TALC, a self-contained program for

identified and non-identified students with emotional and educational needs. Two of the 13 special

education teachers service the Alternative Special Education Program (ASEP), a partially self-contained

program for students who need support in some areas of learning. One of the 13 special education

teachers coordinates the Activity Based Learning (ABL) program. The ABL program services students

who are on the autism spectrum or who present other developmental disorders. Another special

education teacher coordinates the newly developed Transition Program, which services students

transitioning back into the district. One of the 13 special education teachers serves as a transition

coordinator, assisting students in their transition after high school and meeting their vocational needs.

The remaining five special education teachers support students in co-taught learning environments and

resource settings. Students in special education spend time with non-disabled peers in co-taught classes.

Students in the TALC, ASEP and ABL programs all have opportunities to be with non-disabled peers in

mainstream classes, athletic activities, social clubs and/or groups. The primary goal of the school's ESL

program is to enable all ELLs to achieve communicative and linguistic competence in English and to

perform to their potential in their other academic classes. There is one ESL teacher and two

paraprofessionals in the building who currently service 15 students. This teacher is responsible for

planning and delivering daily lessons to five classes comprising ten different groups of students over a

two-day block schedule. Each class size averages four students and the student to teacher is ratio 4:1.

The two paraprofessionals provide ELLs support for their content area classes and ESL

reinforcement/enrichment activities. An average of four different languages is spoken by students in

each ELL class. There is a variety of types of assessment data, such as the Language Assessment System

(LAS Links and CAPT scores), used to support services for identified students and ELLs. When the

school performs ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school

community, it will improve the specialized services to students and ensure that each student achieves the

school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, teacher interviews, panel presentation)

Commendations:

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

- The highly effective school and community services of the ESL department

- The use of iPass and Naviance technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student

- The use of individual and advisory group meetings with counselors

- The preventative health and the direct intervention services of the nurse's office

- The wide range of print and electronic materials offered through the library/media center

- The responsiveness of the library/media specialist to student interest and needs in obtaining information and resources

- The concerted efforts made by student support staff members to provide support services collaboratively and proactively to a large number of students

Recommendations:

- Develop and implement a plan to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn and apply information in the information literacy curriculum

- Develop and implement a written, formal, developmental guidance program

- Examine how school counselors utilize their time to assist students. Develop a mechanism to address the social/emotional needs of students to ensure that allows equitable time for school counselors to meet regularly with students to provide, personal, academic, career and college counseling

- Create ongoing formal assessment programs using relevant data and feedback from the school community to improve services in school counseling, school health, library/media, and support services so that each student achieves that school's 21st century learning expectations

- Develop written and electronic communications that meet the needs of parent and families of the school community especially for the at-risk students.

7 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.

Community Resources for Learning

The community and the district's governing body is inconsistent in providing dependable funding for a wide range of programs and services, sufficient professional and support staff, professional development opportunities, curriculum revision, adequate technology, sufficient equipment and instructional supplies to implement an instructional program to meet the school's 21st century learning expectations**.** The Town of Vernon's education budgets have gone to referendum every year but one, since 2003. Voter turnout is reported to be low. As a result, the funding has fluctuated:

- 2009-10   .30% $ 45, 835, 932

- 2010-11   3.76% $ 47, 558,959

- 2011-12   (.20%) $ 47,462,358

- 2012-13   2.20% $ 48,520,997

The self-study reflects that the principal develops the budget with staff input, and department heads are provided the opportunity to defend their budget proposals prior to a final decision by the building principal. Although in teacher interviews, some teachers did not feel included in the budget process. The superintendent then reviews the budget proposal and brings it to the board of education. Although the superintendent submitted the budget to the board of education, as it was presented to the superintendent the budget was reduced resulting in four positions cut last year, one in each of the four core departments, and this year one social studies position will be eliminated. The board of education and the town council refer to a district administration team when budget cuts need to be made at their level. While many factors are considered in making budgetary decisions, student data regarding 21st century learning expectations is not currently used in the budget process. In the Endicott survey 66.8 percent of students agrees that their school has a wide-range of programs and services. To its credit, the school offers a

range of athletic and co-curricular activities without assessing student participation fees. Only 25.7 percent of staff feels that the community and district's governing body provide dependable funding for a wide range of programs and services and 29.9 percent of parents believes that the community provides dependable funding for programs and services. When the school's governing body is able to provide consistent and adequate funding, it will be more likely that the students and staff will meet all of Rockville's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, Endicott survey, teachers, school leadership)

The school minimally develops, plans, and funds programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant, to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment, and to keep the school clean on a daily basis. According to the Endicott survey 55 percent of staff and 33.4 percent of students agree that the school is clean and well maintained. In a facility tour with a member of public works, the maintenance supervisor, and the head custodian it was communicated that there have been substantial repairs made to areas of the building and ongoing plans exists to regularly maintain features of the facility. An example of this is the use of an annual $5,000 budget to replace ceiling tiles. Further, the school also utilizes a web-based program called School Dude. Faculty can submit maintenance requests to the main office secretary who submits the request electronically to the facilities department. The maintenance requests are electronically stored with a timestamp indicating when they were submitted and the maintenance staff can also input the date of completion. This provides an ongoing systematic way of documenting maintenance and repair. However even with this program, evidence points to some areas in need of repair and the faculty does not seem to be aware of a timeline for these repairs. The Tools for Schools program that focuses on indoor air quality was implemented in the spring of 2011. This program has identified several areas of concern at RHS. Several facility systems are either in disrepair or lack evidence of regular inspection and maintenance. Evidence to support proper maintenance and testing of sprinkler heads, emergency lighting, air quality, ventilation, temperature control, and water quality could not be obtained from the director of school facilities. Poor ventilation

was highlighted on the facility tour in both the library and weight room. Throughout the building, there are missing and stained ceiling tiles, leaky pipes, sinks with no hot water, dust-covered air registers, significant air temperature variations, and exposed electrical wires in wall outlets without covers. The Tools for Schools program has also identified that stairwells and classrooms are not dusted. Additionally, chalkboards, which present potential allergy issues, still exist in many classrooms. There has also been a fume hood in one of the chemistry rooms that has gone weeks without being repaired or replaced. Although the school parking lot and driveway were replaced in 2008, there have been numerous complaints about the safety of the lot. These were documented in the self-study and were also communicated in interviews with faculty. The staff and public parking lots on both sides of the building suffer from poor drainage, inadequate plowing and remediation of slippery surfaces, and inadequate lighting. Endicott survey results indicate that over 32 percent of the staff believes that parking is not safe and secure. Apart from a daily routine, written plans to ensure daily cleaning requirements do not exist. Weekly, a randomly selected area is checked for cleanliness. A weekly custodial inspection report is completed for distribution to the director of plant operations, the principal, and the head custodian. A review of these weekly inspection reports over the past two school years reveals that in ten of these reports, the area inspected is not indicated. There are also gaps in the records during which such reports have not been completed. When the school develops, plans and funds programs regarding facility maintenance and cleanliness, with follow through on all requests, then consistency in maintaining the facility will be achieved. (facility tour, self-study, maintenance staff interview, teacher interview)

The community is inconsistent in its ability to support an adequate level of funding to address the school's long-range plans in regards to technology, facility and capital improvements. The annual budget is the basis for funding of current programs and services. The principal and superintendent seek to ensure that all current programs continue to be funded. Department heads submit budget requests to the principal, who then approves proposals for submission to the board of education. The Vernon Town

Council has final approval of the budget. In the budget process, some costs such as fuel, are reviewed annually. New programs that are student generated may run provisionally with an unpaid advisor to assess the program's viability. The school budget provided as evidence, shows an increase in the computer hardware capital outlay of $13,035 in 2008-09 to $16, 292 in 2010-11, but is eliminated in the 2011-12 and 2012-13 approved budget, and replacement of computer equipment and instructional equipment is also removed from the 2012-13 approved budget. In parent, teacher and support staff meetings, lack of computer access, poor Internet connections and outdated equipment was a concern. The Endicott survey shows that less than half of the students agree that they have sufficient number of computers, and only 17.6 percent of the staff agrees that the school has a long-range plan to address the facilities, future programs, services, staffing levels and capital improvements. At a meeting with the board of education, it was stated that full wireless service will be in place for the next school year. The business manager, director of school facilities and the assistant director of school facilities meet and inspect the school to prioritize projects and determine timelines. Student enrollment is monitored for planning purposes. The superintendent looks at enrollment on a ten-year cycle. Projected enrollment is determined by the birth rate within the district and enrollment at Rockville High School is projected to be 960 in 2017 and 1,020 in 2021. A six-year capital improvement plan to address future facility needs indicates that roof replacement and courtyard upgrades are planned. At this time, parents, students and community groups are not specifically part of the strategic long-term plan. Many teachers said that they have used grant funding for equipment and supplies, and it is concerning that the grant writing position has been eliminated for the 2013-2014 school year. Teachers and support staff said in meetings that they have been unable to obtain classroom and office supplies for the past few months. Further, in multiple interviews teachers expressed a lack of adequate access to computers due to the availability of labs and a minimal amount of other technology such as projectors, SMARTBoards, graphing calculators, etc. Only until the community fully supports a budget that provides adequate funding for technology, equipment

and supplies,will all students have sufficient opportunities to reach the school's 21st century learning

expectations. (teacher interviews, school board, parents, self-study, students)

Although building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the

budgetary process, faculty involvement is inconsistent. The superintendent provides the principal with a

timeline for the budget. Department chairs within the building indicated that they meet with their

department and ask teachers to submit their budget requests for the following year. They then present

their portion of the budget to the principal. The principal confers with department chairs and reviews the

budget requests before sending the budget on to the superintendent. The principal presents and defends

budget requests publicly to the board of education. If the budget is not approved, the principal goes back

to confer with his department chairs on what should be cut in their respective departments. According to

the self-study, once the budget requests have been approved, reports are available to administrators and

department chairs to track the budget. Department chairs are an integral part of the budget process.

Department chairs survey results indicate that 86 percent reports they have a say in the amount of

funding allocated to their department; 100 percent says they determine how funds are dispersed and

which vendors are chosen; 93 percent says they have input into where to prioritize when cuts are

necessary. Not all faculty report feeling included in the budgetary process. According to a school

generated survey monkey survey completed by faculty, when asked if feel actively involved with the

budget for their department, 39.8 percent indicated always, 29.6 percent indicated sometimes, and 30.6

percent indicated never. Teachers expressed that even when they are able to participate in the budgeting

process, they do not feel that their students' needs are being met. When faculty and administration

collaborate and work together to develop and implement a budget, the school's stakeholders will be

better informed and better able to meet the needs of students in achieving the 21st learning expectations..

(self-study, building administrators, Survey Monkey Survey, teachers)

Generally the school site and plant supports the delivery of high quality school programs and services. The self-study outlines many of the renovations that began in 2005 and continued over the five-year process. Significant upgrades included the replacement of the library roof to remedy constant leaking and the addition of a new, larger auditorium. The renovation of the original auditorium added four classrooms including a new chorus room and a new multi-purpose room. Library renovations enabled improved supervision and added a TV/video studio. Administrative offices were also renovated. Two cafeteria kitchens were merged into one large centralized kitchen area resulting in expanded cafeteria seating. The physical education department gained space in the locker rooms, weight room, athletic training room, and a female coach's locker room, but lost storage closets and gym seating capacity, creating inconvenient egress points for practices and games. According to the public works representative, a plan exists to annually replace ceiling tiles throughout the building. In the area of security, 157 cameras were installed along with a viewing room. A key system was added to secure main building entrances, but that system has had significant issues with its effectiveness. In addition, the main entrance to the high school was repositioned and designated parking for visitors and staff in the front of the building was increased. Many areas in the building were brought up to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) code, specifically bathrooms and science labs, but one concern is the functionality of installed shower and eye-wash stations. In addition, the agricultural education program received numerous updates and enhancements such as the removal of asbestos tiles, repairs to the hay barn and garage, installation of new paddock and chain link fencing, and repaving of the asphalt area. Each department within the high school has sufficient space for student occupancy, ensuring full implementation of the educational program. Although some departments must share classrooms, adequate rooms to house the number of classes offered per block exist. A reallocation of space within the high school allowed the Total Alternative Learning Center (TALC), the school's alternative education program, to be moved from an off-site location to RHS. A committee survey administered in February, 2012 reveals over 90 percent of the faculty feels there is adequate parking space for staff and

students, while only 53 percent feels there is adequate parking space for visitors. The front and side teacher parking lots have had lights added to improve security, and the student parking lot has had barriers installed to reduce speeding and erratic student driving. Handicap spaces have been placed in front of the auditorium and gymnasium to improve access. Although many infrastructure improvements have been made since the last NEASC visit, results of the Endicott survey reveal only 26.6 percent of the staff feels the school's physical plant and site support the delivery of high quality services and programs. A departmental survey referenced in the self-study, teacher interviews, and facility tour revealed the following concerns: decreased storage space, library materials damaged due to excessive moisture, humidity, leaking ceiling tiles, and loud noise from ventilation and the heating system. Also, thin construction and/or temporary walls between classrooms and offices don't adequately buffer sound preventing confidentiality and creating distractions. Further, teachers in the second floor science lab rooms report an inadequate amount of lab space and an insufficient amount of power outlets. Art teachers expressed the need for adequate work space and had concerns with the safety of the kilns housed in the corner of one of the art rooms; however, it does seem that plans are in place to build walls around the kilns in order to improve safety. While the school site and plant generally supports the delivery of high quality school programs and services, ongoing maintenance of the facility as well as improvement of classroom space and storage will further enhance student learning. (teacher interviews, facility tour, self-study, building administration)

The school maintains up-to-date documentation that components of the physical plant and facilities meet applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations. The school district's director of facilities maintains documentation and schedules required inspections by local, state, and federal agencies. The director of public works, director of building and grounds, and the Vernon Board of Education have provided evidence that major systems are maintained on a regular testing and inspection program schedule including the following: fire extinguishers, sprinkler systems,

fire alarm systems, range hoods, fume hoods, radon, asbestos, and emergency eyewash/shower stations. Detailed inspection results are maintained at the board of education offices and/or on site. Results that indicate a failure to comply with applicable standards are referred to the director of public works. A review of the 2011 Emergency Lighting System Annual Inspection Report reveals that not all of the 83 lights listed in the report were functioning. Most emergency lights did not have functioning batteries at the light source needed to power the lights in the event that electrical power was disrupted. Two of the lights were not connected to any electrical power source. The 2011 Annual Inspection Report does not indicate that all areas of the building were inspected. Maintenance staff reports that testing is done each fall and that most battery-powered emergency lights are currently functional. Staff requests regarding facility issues are emailed to the office of the principal, and then a work order request is generated through a program called School DUDE by the main office secretary. The facilities staff will then attempt to address these issues in a timely fashion. Teacher interviews revealed that the response time on these requests varies greatly. While School DUDE maintains records of open and completed work orders, a formal process to solicit specific feedback from staff about the effectiveness of ongoing maintenance and cleanliness of the facility is not in place. The science department maintains an inventory of chemicals and shares this document with the Vernon Fire Department. The school district recently updated the Chemical Safety Plan for the science department; however, there is a need for a comprehensive master list of all chemicals stored in the facility. In the absence of evidence of an annual custodial and maintenance assessment to document that all regulations have been met, a survey of custodial staff at RHS was conducted. Results indicate that 67 percent of custodial staff feels supplies are inadequate and 75 percent feels that staffing is inadequate to properly maintain facilities. Additionally during facility tour, it was apparent that there was a lack of agreement amongst maintenance staff and administration on the frequency of inspections. Although Rockville High School is regularly inspected according to federal and state laws, it is apparent that the frequency of inspections for compliance needs to be regularly communicated between members of maintenance staff and with

administration to assure continued adherence. (self-study, meeting with public works and maintenance supervisor, facility tour)

Despite the efforts by the professional staff, the school continues to be challenged by the need to engage parents and families in their student's education and to specifically reach out to those families who have been less connected to the school. Staff members at Rockville High School engage in many activities to elicit and increase parental involvement. The student handbook that is distributed at the beginning of the school year contains information for families about the school calendar, schedule, rules, and extracurricular activities. According to the self-study, the school's iPASS grading system has significantly improved communication between classroom teachers and parents/guardians regarding academic progress, and teachers utilize iPASS to contact parents/guardians with specific concerns. However, at the parent meeting some parents expressed that they did not receive information on how to access the system. The school website contains information about upcoming events and announcements. The board of education meetings are televised on the local cable access channel. Open House and eighth grade tours are offered to the community. While staff and parents report that sporting and fine art events are well attended, academic events and meetings are less so. Staff members report that they reach out to parents via phone calls and emails to discuss concerns about students. In teacher interviews with the special education staff they report that they have frequent and ongoing communication with parents/guardians of their students, including phone calls and meetings. The school counseling office has arranged evening parent group meetings off-site, closer to town, to encourage participation, but attendance was reported as poor. In the Endicott survey, approximately 50 percent of both staff and parents responded that they felt the professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in students' education. When the school is able to fully engage all families as partners in their child's education, students will be able to achieve their highest level of success and progress toward the 21st century learning expectations. (Endicott survey, parents, teachers, school board)

The school has developed a variety of productive community, business and higher education partnerships that enhance and support student learning, however, they have been challenged in their attempt to increase parental/guardian involvement in this process. The school has established partnerships with local businesses that provide students with internships and job shadow experiences. In the self-study, faculty and students report that there are at least 70 community resources that are consistently maintained and utilized. Examples include Rockville Bank, Eastern Connecticut Health Network, VCA Valley Animal Hospital and the Indian Valley YMCA. Allied Health students spend time in local health care facilities. The RHS Career Center facilitates a School-to-Business partnership that includes employability skills and guest speakers from the local business community. The special education department offers "The Next Step", a community based vocational experience, as well as a work program facilitated by the school transition coordinator. The school maintains several partnerships with educational organizations and institutes of higher learning that offer opportunities for students to earn high school and college credit simultaneously through the College Career Pathways Program and the Early College Experience program, including University of Connecticut, Three Rivers Community College and Manchester Community College.

The school has worked to increase parent and guardian involvement in their students learning. Open House is held at the beginning of each school year and is communicated via the school website, e-mailing, and mailing flyers to each household. Art and music performances are held throughout the school year and are open to parents and guardians. The school counseling office offers parents programs for incoming freshmen and college information for upperclassmen. Even with these interventions, parent and guardian involvement in school meetings and activities has been inconsistent. The Endicott survey reports 49.5 percent of staff and 57.4 percent of parents are in agreement that the school has effective partnerships with parents, community organizations, businesses and higher education to support student learning. While the school has strong community, business and higher education partnerships, with more

parent and guardian input, efforts to meet the school's 21st century learning expectations will be ensured. (teachers, self-study, Endicott survey, support staff , parents)

Commendations:

- The wide range of programs and services offered to the student body

- The well maintained and clean common areas

- The new auditorium

- The expansion of security measures in the building

- The efforts made to engage parents in their student's learning

Recommendations:

- Develop a plan that ensures consistent and ongoing maintenance of facility

- Institute and implement a plan for follow through and timeliness of maintenance requests

- Provide adequate technology and technological support in order for students and teachers to achieve their 21st century learning expectations

- Implement a long-range, strategic plan for the school site and plant to consistently support high quality school programs and services

- Improve communication between maintenance staff and administration regarding the frequency of and work completed due to inspections

- Implement additional venues to engage all parents/guardians in their student's learning

- Develop a formal process to solicit specific feedback from staff about the effectiveness of ongoing maintenance and cleanliness of the facility

- Make necessary repairs to: emergency lights throughout the building; shower and eye wash stations in labs; insufficient power outlets in labs; and safety of kiln in art room.

- Maintain a comprehensive master list of all chemicals stored in the facility

Commendations and Recommendations

COMMENDATIONS

- The rich and diverse curricular offerings that reflect Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations and provide students with various educational pathways

- The creation of *Greater Expectations* to oversee and guide the process of curriculum evaluation, development, and implementation so that all curricula will be written in a common format.

- The authentic and innovative learning opportunities both in and out of the classroom and opportunities for civic engagement.

- The authentic learning opportunities that are employed in many of the elective classes.

- The varied professional development videos available on PD360.

- The collaborative nature of the 9th grade academies to review assessments and improve curriculum and instruction for students.

- The teachers who currently employ a broad range of assessments as a routine part of their lessons.

- The creation of a formal structure for a program where all students have one adult who knows them well.

- The concerted efforts made by student support staff members to provide support services collaboratively and proactively to a large number of students

- The well maintained and clean common areas

- The renovations to the auditorium

- The expansion of security measures in the building

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a process to ensure that 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, and are central to the development of policies and procedures, and drive the decision-making and the allocation of resources.

- Develop a system to ensure a clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum.

- Increase formal opportunities for curricular coordination and articulation between academic areas and with the sending school.

- Provide sufficient instructional materials, technology, equipment, and supplies to fully implement the curriculum and support co-curricular and other learning opportunities.

- Ensure that all teachers use formative assessment to modify their instruction as a result of the data derived from the assessments.

- Develop and implement a protocol for examining student work that results in teacher reflection about instruction, higher expectations of students in each classroom and the delivery of a challenging curriculum for all students.

- Develop and implement a systematic program for obtaining and using student feedback to revise instructional practices.

- Collect, disseminate, and analyze data to respond to inequities in student achievement.

- Investigate opportunities to provide teachers of all grades and common courses with a formal time to collaborate.

- Develop and use a formal process to create, analyze, and revise assessments.

- Develop and implement a formal process to examine evidence of student learning with the purpose of revising curriculum and instruction.

- Develop a purposeful curriculum for the advisory program to ensure a meaningful role for faculty resulting in a positive impact on students.

- Create a formal implementation plan that has input from all school constituents that leads to timely and meaningful professional development for all staff.

- Develop and implement a written, formal, developmental guidance program

- Implement with commitment, the new Connecticut Educator evaluation system so that teacher observations and evaluations are consistent, equitable and beneficial to teacher growth and success.

- Institute and implement a plan for follow through and timeliness of maintenance requests.

- Provide adequate technology and technological support in order for students and teachers to achieve their 21st century learning expectations.

- Implement a long-range, strategic plan for the school site and plant to consistently support high quality school programs and services.

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 Rockville 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 Committee requires that the evaluation report be made public in accordance with the Committee'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 Committee 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 Committee requires that the principal of Rockville 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 Committee 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 Committee 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 Committee has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Committee within sixty days (60) of occurrence any substantive change which negatively impacts on the school's adherence to the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. The report of substantive change must describe the change itself and detail any impact which the change has had on the school's ability to meet the Standards for Accreditation. The Committee's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix on page 15. All other substantive changes should be included in the Two- and Five-Year Progress Reports and/or the Annual Report which is required of each member school to ensure that the Committee office has current statistical data on the school.

The Committee 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 Committee'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 Committee staff following the on-site visit.

The visiting committee is grateful for the hospitality that was extended to them throughout the visit. We acknowledge the great collaboration among the faculty and staff at Rockville High School that resulted in the preparation of this self-study. The overwhelming sense of pride in their school and the genuine respect they had for one another was prevalent in every aspect of our visit. Their ability to make us feel welcome and invited into their community was greatly appreciated.

Rockville High School
NEASC Accreditation Visit
April 28 to May 1, 2013

Visiting Committee

Maria Silvestri, Chair West Springfield High School West Springfield, MA	Allyson Conca Fairfield Warde High School Fairfield, CT
Ned Gallacher, Assistant Chair NEAS&C Burlington, MA	Brenda Berardy Windsor High School Windsor, CT
Kevin Hill Southbridge Middle/High School Southbridge, MA	Thomas Browne Leominster High School Leominster, MA
Deborah McKinstry Tantasqua Regional High School Fiskdale, MA	David Uminski Oakmont Regional High School Ashburnham, MA
William McLaughlin Watertown High School Watertown, MA	Keith Berthiaume Simsbury, CT Simsbury, CT
Ethan Warner Orville H. Platt High School Meriden, CT	Andres Benn Providence Career & Technical Academy Providence, RI
Rebecca Cruz Naugatuck High School Naugatuck, CT	Greg Shyloski Old Saybrook High School Old Saybrook, CT
Sophia Velez Oxford High School Oxford, CT	Amy Green Taconic High School Pittsfield, MA

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

Committee on Public Secondary Schools

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

Principals of member schools must report to the Committee 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 Committee's Standards for Accreditation. The report of a substantive change must describe the change itself as well as detail the impact on the school's ability to meet the Standards. The following are potential areas where there might be negative substantive changes which must be reported:

- elimination of fine arts, practical arts and student activities

- diminished upkeep and maintenance of facilities

- significantly decreased funding

- cuts in the level of administrative and supervisory staffing

- cuts in the number of teachers and/or guidance counselors

- grade level responsibilities of the principal

- cuts in the number of support staff

- decreases in student services

- cuts in the educational media staffing

- increases in student enrollment that cannot be accommodated

- takeover by the state

- inordinate user fees

- changes in the student population that warrant program or staffing modification(s) that cannot be accommodated, e.g., the number of special needs students or vocational students or students with limited English proficiency