

New England Association of Schools and Colleges



Committee on Public Secondary Schools

Report of the Visiting Committee for Orville H. Platt High School

Meriden, Connecticut

October 14-17, 2012

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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 O.H. Platt 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 O.H. Platt 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.

Introduction

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

The governing body of the Association is its Board of Trustees which supervises the work of six Committees: the Committee on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE), the Committee on Independent Schools (CIS), the Committee on Public Secondary Schools (CPSS), the Committee on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI), the Committee on Public Elementary and Middle Schools (CPEMS), and the Committee 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 of Teaching and Learning Standards

- School Culture and Leadership
- School Resources for Learning
- Community Resources for Learning

The accreditation program for public schools involves a threefold process: the self-study conducted by the local professional staff, the on-site evaluation conducted by the Committee's visiting 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 show continued progress addressing identified needs.

Preparation for the Evaluation Visit - The School Self-Study

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At O.H. Platt High School, a committee of 10 members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people. In addition to faculty members, the self-study committees included three administrators, 70 staff members, nine students, and four parents.

The self-study of O.H. Platt High School extended over a period of 20 school months from September 2010 to June 2012. The visiting committee was pleased to note that students and parents joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

Public schools evaluated by the 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, O.H. Platt 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 15 evaluators was assigned by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate O.H. Platt High School. The Committee members spent four days in Meriden, Connecticut, 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 teachers, department leaders, school administrators, and district administrators from New England public schools, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of O.H. Platt High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 65 hours shadowing 15 students for a half-day
- a total of 20 hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)
- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facility
- individual meetings with 30 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers
- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

Each conclusion on the report was agreed to by visiting committee consensus.

Sources of evidence for each conclusion drawn by the visiting committee appear in parenthesis in the Standards sections of the report. The seven Standards for Accreditation reports include commendations and recommendations that in the visiting committee's judgment will be helpful to the school as it works to improve teaching and learning and to better meet 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 O.H. Platt High School.

Overview of Findings

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

Teaching and Learning at O.H. Platt High School

The school community at Platt High School has engaged in a dynamic, collaborative and inclusive process to identify its core values and beliefs about learning; however, the core values and beliefs are not yet integrated into the school culture and the classroom on a consistent basis. These core values and beliefs are accompanied by a thorough list of school-wide expectations for 21st century learning. All of these documents were written and approved by a broad spectrum of stakeholders from the school community. The school's Core Values Adherence Committee uses these documents to guide and inform important decisions. While most students and staff demonstrate a basic understanding of these guiding documents, they have not yet become a focal point of daily classroom instruction and assessment. Also, not all members of the school community have a clear understanding regarding the differences between the core values and beliefs, the school's P.R.I.D.E. acronym/motto, and its newer Dream it, Believe it, Achieve it slogan. Each of these three documents is well known and intends to serve useful purposes for the school, but the existence of these three guiding documents (often side by side) contributes to the lack of clarity about the purpose of each.

The district has dedicated substantial funding for the revision of curriculum documents. Many, but not all, of the documents currently utilize the Making Standards Work format. There is frequent and useful articulation of the curriculum documents across the district's two high schools. Most curriculum documents do not yet demonstrate a link to the Platt core values and beliefs or 21st century expectations for student learning. The curriculum documents are not yet fully serving as guides for daily instruction in the classroom.

Platt High School teachers strive to provide rigorous and meaningful instruction, but, in practice, this is not experienced equitably by all students. The freshman academy and its related teaming format provide students with opportunities to see how learning in one content area can be relevant in another. The team-based approach facilitates teachers' instruction as they are more likely to know each student well. School-wide instruction does not frequently or consistently help students to see connections to the school's 21st century expectations for learning. Generally, teacher-centered learning activities predominate and are more likely to be found at the "academic" level of courses. Teachers have not yet consistently integrated methods that allow students to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills, cross-content connections, or how their learning is reflected in the world beyond the classroom.

Meriden Public Schools has provided substantial time to its schools to facilitate the collection, analysis, and use of assessment data by its teachers. Early-release days are used by data teams to analyze data from formative and summative assessments. The district has also implemented a no-zero policy that provides students with opportunities to retake/revise work. Platt High School teachers employ a variety of assessment methods

to gauge student learning but do so inconsistently. While some teachers utilize a variety of assessments within each course, this is not consistent with all teachers and thus some students experience a very limited scope of assessment types. The school has begun to use its school-wide rubrics but has not yet developed protocols for doing so in a way that allows teachers and students to know how well they are meeting the expectations described in the rubrics. The school has not yet developed a way for communicating data gleaned from these rubrics to parents and the community on a regular basis.

Support of Teaching and Learning at O.H. Platt High School

The Meriden Board of Education, the superintendent, and the principal have a productive and professional working relationship. The principal is afforded an appropriate amount of authority to run the school and is also expected to address district-wide initiatives and expectations. The school has made positive strides in attempting to make its course offerings more heterogeneous and reflective of the community that it serves through a reduction from five academic levels to two levels. While some examples of demographic unbalance still persist within these levels, the current state is greatly improved over the prior structure. The school endeavors through a variety of means to engage parents in its decision-making processes, but this remains a challenge.

Platt High School offers a variety of support structures for students. These range from a cooperative school nurse/community health center, to school and career counseling, to special education support services. Though the school has not yet implemented a formal, comprehensive guidance curriculum, these services are well coordinated and integrated with the school at-large. An adequate number of staff in these

areas serves the needs of students. The library-media center is ample in its physical space, but the current staffing level prevents students from experiencing all that this resource has to offer.

While the school building and grounds are slated for a substantial renovation and new construction, the facilities/custodial staff does an admirable job of keeping the school safe and clean. Current spaces such as science labs, computer labs, and classrooms are not fully able to support implementation of the school's curriculum. The planned construction/renovation is slated to address these concerns. The school benefits from a wide range of community partnerships that enhance students' learning experiences.

School and Community Summary

Orville H. Platt High School is located in Meriden, Connecticut, and serves only the community of Meriden. Located in the approximate geographic center of the state, it is equidistant between Hartford and New Haven. It is bordered by Middletown to the east, Wallingford to the south, Cheshire to the west and Berlin to the north. Meriden's population was last reported at 59,493 with a median household income of \$52,742 and 11.2% of the population reported to be living below the poverty level.

Meriden, once referred to as the Silver City due to its manufacture of cutlery and related products, has moved away from its large manufacturing roots. Over the years major manufacturing has shifted away from that industry. There are two major industrial areas in the city that are drawn to its centralized location and proximity to major highways I-91 and I-84. A large Westfield mall operates on the west side of town and is a big draw for area shoppers. The city of Meriden is connected to the cities of New Haven, Hartford, and Springfield, Massachusetts by regional rail service provided by Amtrak, which runs north-to-south through the center of the city. The downtown train station will soon be rebuilt, and city leaders are hoping it will become the focus of a transit hub revitalizing the area.

Twelve public schools operate in the district. There is also one magnet school run by the state that services students in Meriden, Wallingford, Middletown, and Region 13. In addition, there are three parochial school choices and Wilcox Technical High School, which is run by the State of Connecticut.

The Meriden school district is comprised of roughly 8,864 students. Of those, 0.2% are American Indian, 2.2% are Asian, 13.5% are Black, 40.8% are Hispanic and 43.2% are White. Those students qualifying for free or reduced lunch prices comprise 57.7% of the district's population. In addition, 28.6% of students have a non-English home language.

Platt High School is a comprehensive 9-12 high school currently serving 1,186 students. Over the past five years, that is a 10.1% increase in enrollment. Platt is considered an H school within Connecticut's District Reference Group (DRG) based on its enrollment and students' families' education, income, occupation, and need.

Meriden, like most small cities, spends most of its resources on education. According to most recent figures, Meriden's total expenditures and financing uses totaled \$167,984,309. Of those costs, education expenditures totaled \$91,426,798. The percentage of education expenditures is 54.43%.

Not all of those costs are strictly collected from city taxpayers. Education expenditures (\$91,426,798) are offset by state grants for education (\$48,127,877) leaving \$43,298,921. With total revenues totaling \$169,035,199 minus state grants for education (\$48,127,877), a total of \$120,907,322 remains. The percent of local taxation spent on schools, then, is 35.81%.

The average per pupil expenditure for high schools in Connecticut in the year 2007-08 (the last year this data was made public) was \$12,868. Meriden does not calculate the per pupil expenditures according to individual school, but rather by grade level. The high school average for Meriden, which would include both Maloney and Platt High Schools, is \$11,689 per student.

Of the 2009, graduating class, 37% went on to four-year colleges, 36% went on to two-year colleges, 14% entered the work force and 6% joined the armed services. Platt most recently achieved a graduation rate of 89.8 % with a two-year average dropout rate of 2.6%.

There are 84 classroom instructors at Platt High School, creating a student-to-teacher ratio of 14 to 1. Average class size at Platt is 21 students.

Having instituted an attendance policy five years ago, Platt's current student attendance rate is 92.4%. The school's teacher attendance rate is 96%.

Platt maintains significant relationships with local colleges including the Upward Bound and Let's Get Ready programs with Wesleyan University, Community College Partnership with Middlesex Community College, Early College Experience courses with the University of Connecticut and the Developing Tomorrow's Professionals with Southern Connecticut State University. Platt's Guidance Department coordinates campus tours and on-site interviews with Western Connecticut State University, Post University and Lincoln College of New England. Platt's Career Counselor plans field trips, job shadowing experiences, and guest speakers to assist students in career planning.

Platt maintains many close ties with the local business community. The Meriden Chamber of Commerce offers transportation and free admission for students to any Chamber-sponsored event. The Meriden Teacher's Federal Credit Union hosts an annual "Financial Realities" conference for students and families. The Platt High School Key Club and Interact Clubs maintain partnerships with the local Kiwanis and Rotary clubs. Platt also has a chapter of Junior Civitan which is an affiliate of the local Civitan organization. Additionally, Platt and its sister school, Maloney, have a chapter of the

Youth and Government program which is co-sponsored by the Meriden Board of Education and the local YMCA.

Platt recognizes students' accomplishments through a variety of programs. The Student of the Month Program recognizes outstanding student performance in each department, and year-end recognition awards for outstanding performance in all departments are presented during the Underclass and Senior Awards Night. The annual Honors Dinner banquet recognizes students who have achieved honor roll for all of the first three terms. Platt maintains a chapter of the National Honor Society as well. The athletic department honors athletes for their accomplishments with a sports banquet at the conclusion of each sports season. Project Excel provides scholarships and a banquet for the top ten seniors and gives savings bonds and recognition to underclassmen.

Core Values, Beliefs, and 21st Century Expectations for Student Learning

The O. H. Platt High School community believes all students deserve a learning environment in which to achieve their full academic, civic, and social potential. Students must have a physically and emotionally safe, disciplined atmosphere in which they are motivated to set goals, make responsible decisions, and enjoy success. Our multicultural society develops independent, creative, resilient learners and thinkers. With support of school faculty, family, and members of our community, Platt students will become confident, self-sustaining adults who contribute to society.

It all comes down to Platt Panther Pride:



Creencias y Valores

La comunidad de O.H. Platt cree que todos los estudiantes merecen un ambiente de aprendizaje en el que ellos pueden lograr todo su potencial académico, cívico y social. Los estudiantes deben tener un ambiente físicamente, emocionalmente seguro y disciplinado en el que ellos estén motivados a establecer objetivos, hacer decisiones responsables y disfrutar su éxito. Nuestra sociedad multicultural desarrolla estudiantes y pensadores independientes, creativos y fuertes. Con el apoyo del colegio, la facultad, la familia y los miembros de nuestra comunidad, los estudiantes de Platt serán adultos seguros en sí mismo y auto-sostenibles quienes contribuyen a la sociedad.

Learning Expectations

We, the Platt High School community, pledge to meet the following goals and 21st century learning expectations as defined by our school-wide rubrics for all students.

Academic Competencies:

To establish mastery of academic expectations, Platt High School students will:

- Acquire critical thinking and problem solving skills in order to identify, synthesize, and analyze information to reflect learning.
- Demonstrate academic integrity in the school environment.
- Apply positive study skills, work habits, organization, and time management skills to prepare for instruction and employment outside of the classroom.
- Exhibit creativity and innovation in the learning process.
- Develop and enhance technology skills to prepare all learners for the 21st century.
- Acquire an effective level of preparedness in all academic areas as established by the State of Connecticut educational frameworks.
- Develop skills essential to critical and analytical reading of a variety of texts.
- Demonstrate effective verbal and written communication skills.
- Critically reflect on learning in order to improve performance.

Civic Competencies:

To establish mastery of civic expectations, Platt High School students will:

- Demonstrate awareness and acceptance by respecting the differences of others.
- Be responsible citizens by participating in local, national, and global issues.
- Support our community, institutions, and environment through volunteerism.
- Display work preparedness, interview skills, and professionalism.

Social Competencies:

To establish mastery of social expectations, Platt High School students will:

- Exhibit respectful and courteous behaviors toward themselves and others.
- Develop interpersonal skills by working cooperatively and collaboratively with others.
- Display discipline through patience and self control.
- Demonstrate responsible and independent work habits.
- Demonstrate healthy habits and life skills.

Teaching and Learning Standards

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of and for Learning



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 Expectations

Conclusions

The school community at Platt High School has engaged in a dynamic, collaborative and inclusive process to identify its core values and beliefs about learning; however, the core values and beliefs are not yet integrated into the school culture and the classroom on a consistent basis. Beginning in 2009 the school's Core Values Adherence Committee recorded the process used by the stakeholders including dates of meetings and names of participants. They reviewed the 2011 NEASC Standards and district profile to ensure alignment. They reviewed the school's five-year NEASC review which helped the committee identify strengths and needs to better design a course of action as it developed the school's 21st century core values and beliefs.

The committee researched comparable school districts and reviewed online materials from Partnership for 21st Century Skills and other research-based best practices. They created and distributed surveys to each stakeholder group of the educational community: parents, students, staff, and the community of Meriden. Each group had slightly different priorities for the core values and beliefs: students were most concerned with the academic skills; parents wanted to make sure that their students achieved organizational skills; teachers wanted a disciplined learning environment; and the business community was interested in social skills. Despite the interest from each stakeholder and the fact that the core values and beliefs are widely displayed on school walls and on the website, they are not fully embedded into the school community. While the statement of core values and beliefs effectively states the 21st century skills and

qualities that the school aims to imbue in all students, it does not yet describe the actions and outcomes that are necessary to bring these values should be brought to fruition. There is confusion among some members of the school community – specifically students and parents – about whether the school motto: *Dream It, Believe It, Achieve it* is, in fact, the statement of core values, beliefs and learning expectations. The students and teachers are able to paraphrase the Panther P.R.I.D.E. (professionalism, respect, integrity, discipline, enthusiasm) acronym but are generally unable to indicate how these values integrate with the stated core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Consequently, the school’s core values and beliefs are not yet serving as a single point of focus for key school decisions and activities. (self-study, students, website, teachers, department heads, student shadowing, panel presentation, community survey, teacher interview)

Platt High School has 21st century learning expectations for students which address academic, social, and civic competencies. There are 18 articulated competencies which relate to (though not on a one-to-one basis) the school-wide rubrics. Platt’s core values and beliefs are well publicized on their website and posted in many locations throughout the school building. The school-wide rubrics are also well publicized on the Platt website. Notwithstanding publication and posting of Platt’s core values and beliefs, students and parents frequently confuse the core values and beliefs with other Platt mottos (*Dream it, Believe it, Achieve it* and *PRIDE*) or only reference certain elements of the full core values and beliefs.

Although many members of the Platt school community have experience with the 21st century expectations for learning, the frequency and effectiveness with which they are implemented in the classroom vary widely from department to department and

teacher to teacher. The school's accompanying school-wide rubrics include expectation points that allow for a rating and scoring of student work in one of three categories: meets expectations, progressing, or unclear of expectations. The rubrics include opportunity for student reflection, teacher comments, and a place for a total score. Implementation of the rubrics varies as well. In some cases, the rubrics are used by teachers to communicate student performance without seeking student input – essentially a one-way communication. In other cases, the rubrics serve as a tool for reflective dialogue between student and teacher, and provide an opportunity for both teacher and student to discuss their respective roles in creating a learning environment in which students can achieve their academic, civic, and social potential. Implementation is showing growth but is currently inconsistent. Therefore, while the published core values and beliefs, learning expectations and accompanying school-wide rubrics are somewhat embedded in school culture, they are not yet implemented in their entirety with fidelity and thereby are not yet currently serving as a tool to drive instruction and school improvement. (self-study, parents, students, faculty)

Platt's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are somewhat reflected in the culture of the school, but do not yet actively drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, or guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations. Once the school has established a formal process to systemically embed the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations into all disciplines, and ultimately into the fabric of Platt High School, the school will make better progress toward becoming a more effective and equitable school. (self-study, parents, students, faculty)

A core group from O.H. Platt High School, made up of thirteen teachers and class officers from each grade, 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. The school leadership in the Core Values Adherence Committee has a process and a timeline for the regular review and revision of its core values, beliefs, and the learning expectations. The committee meets the first Tuesday of each quarter. Their goals are that 21st century learning expectations and core values and beliefs “be reflected in the culture of the school. They drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom and they guide school’s policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations.” Additionally, the results of a survey given in 2009 reflect the priorities of the business community, the faculty, parents, and students. While there have been school-wide readings, research, and nine days of professional development about 21st century learning expectations, school leaders and faculty beyond the committee are not able to cite research on 21st century learning skills.

The school has dedicated two Thursdays a month to data team meetings. During these meetings, content-area team members are given the opportunity to address achievement gaps and evaluate state, district, and department assessments as well as teacher-created rubrics. School-wide rubrics and learning expectations are addressed on a limited basis.

Additionally, Platt High School’s learning expectations align with the Meriden Public Schools’ goals. The district and the school share the belief that students need a safe and disciplined environment and that they should be prepared for life in a multicultural society. They both have the goal that students will be self-sustaining adults

who continue their education and contribute to society. A major difference in the mission of the Meriden Public Schools and Platt High School is that the district takes the adult responsibility in the following: “The Board of Education will look to past successes and build upon a solid foundation of academic achievement to produce the program initiatives necessary for students to thrive academically, socially and emotionally.” At this time, the school’s published core values and beliefs do not yet describe the adult actions by which the stated values will be brought to fruition by members of the school community. Thus, the school has established a promising structure for the ongoing review of its core values and beliefs but is yet to fully implement this structure. (student-shadowing, classroom observations, self-study, student work, teacher interview, school leadership)

Commendations:

1. The thoughtful and inclusive process used to draft the school’s core values and beliefs
2. The establishment of a Core Values Adherence Committee
3. Demonstration of professionalism by staff and students as stated in core values and beliefs
4. The school administration’s efforts to unite the school community’s understanding of the core values through the use of memorable acronyms such as PRIDE

Recommendations:

1. Integrate core values and beliefs and 21st century learning expectations in curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom
2. Ensure participation on Core Values Adherence Committee is representative of the school and community demographics
3. Ensure that the school-wide rubrics are aligned with measureable 21st century learning expectations

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 and problem-solving
 - higher order thinking
 - cross-disciplinary learning
 - authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school
 - informed and ethical use of technology
4. There is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum.
5. Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.
6. Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.
7. The district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research.

Curriculum

Conclusions

The Platt High School curriculum is being redesigned to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations; however, currently this is only occurring in some academic areas. Adopting formats from Larry Ainsworth's *Making Standards Work*, department chairs and classroom teachers are in varying stages of curriculum revision. Over the past two years, time over the summer, after school, and during scheduled Thursday early release meetings has been dedicated to the revision of curriculum documents. Teachers in mathematics, science, and English have worked closely with district-level curriculum coordinators, with teachers from Maloney High School, and with teachers within their own departments to examine core skills and requirements for each course. Most of the current curricular documents do not yet align with Platt High School's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations for students, nor do they identify specific expectation responsibilities for each department. Within and across departments, informal conversations are taking place regarding focus skills and assessments and how they align with the school's core values and beliefs, but little formal alignment has been established in the school's curriculum documents. The district and school are making progress in unifying their curriculum documents with the core values and beliefs. Once this is done, the school will be better equipped to determine whether students are truly achieving proficiency in its 21st century expectations for learning. (central office staff, school leadership, department leaders, teachers, self-study)

Not all curriculum documents are currently 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. Over the past three years, teachers at PHS have been meeting within departments, with counterparts from Maloney High School, and from the middle school to begin the process of curriculum revision. Using formats based on Ainsworth's *Making Standards Work*, PHS teachers and department chairs in mathematics, English, and science have begun rewriting course curricula using templates for unit overviews and for unit frameworks.

Curriculum documents for other departments are 3-5 years old, yet those departments all have plans to begin the revision process this school year and intend to follow the formats adopted by the core disciplines. Revised curricular documents in English, math, and science include units of study with essential questions, concepts, skills, and time frames in which to teach these units. A few of these curriculum documents include guidelines for suggested assessments and projects that can be applied to each unit, but the majority of curriculum binders mention these assessments in name only. While a few of the curriculum binders include departmental rubrics, none currently includes the school-wide rubrics or identifies specific PHS 21st century learning expectations for which that department is responsible. Of the revisions that have been completed, only selected science and math course and unit overviews include alignment to the PHS core values and beliefs, while others are either aligned to those adopted by Maloney High School or include no alignment at all. While curriculum in most departments at PHS is in various stages of revision, teachers express enthusiasm for the

process and are eager to collaborate with each other to improve these documents and to align them to the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century expectations for student learning. As teachers are empowered and guided to develop the curriculum documents, they will be more fully aligned to the school's core values and beliefs and more fully incorporate best practice instructional strategies and assessments. Then, the school will be more able to ensure that all students have sufficient opportunity to be successful in their achievement of the school's expectations for student learning. (central office staff, school leadership, department leaders, teachers, students, self-study)

In its current state, the PHS curriculum does not consistently emphasize 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 the informed and ethical use of technology; however, the faculty at PHS is working toward this common goal. Within each discipline, some teachers are increasing their frequency of activities that incorporate higher order thinking skills, inquiry, and problem-solving. The science department regularly requires students to work together on laboratory experiments, and students in the career/technical education department are frequently required to apply their learning to hands-on projects in their classes. Students across disciplines are required to sign an ethical use of technology form, promising to use computers and other technology in the building with respect and professionalism. Some authentic learning opportunities are afforded to students through the 20-hour community service graduation requirement, often met when students elect to take the Human Development and Family Sciences (HDFS) course, but explicit connections to the real world are not often found within the curriculum documents for

most of the academic core courses. The freshman academy model stands as a positive example for these methods and philosophy. Teachers ask students to integrate their learning across disciplines, however this promising practice is not supported or guided consistently by the curriculum documents. Outside of the freshman academy, there are few formal opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning; informal connections between departments occasionally occur on a case-by-case basis, but are not formally planned into the curriculum. The district and school are making progress with its curriculum revision. Targeted levels of higher order thinking, depth of understanding, and real-world application are not explicit; therefore, PHS is unable to ensure that all students are appropriately challenged in all levels of all classes. (central office staff, school leadership, department leaders, teachers, students, self-study)

Platt High School is working towards alignment of the written and taught curriculum. District curriculum coordinators have been working closely with the teachers from both district high schools, and are in regular communication with teachers and department heads as curriculum revisions are instituted. In order to ensure that changes are being properly implemented, department heads and building administrators conduct classroom walkthroughs. Platt High School teachers keep in regular contact with their department chairs, with teachers in their own disciplines, and with Maloney teachers through email. In addition, data team meetings are conducted regularly to analyze the impact of curricula on student learning and alignment. Currently, recently-revised curriculum documents include common assessments and tasks, and teachers regularly discuss their findings. However, the revision process is still in its early stages and most curricular documents are incomplete meaning that most courses do not benefit from this

level of alignment between the written and taught curriculum. (central office staff, school leadership, department leaders, teachers, self-study)

Curricular coordination exists between and among academic areas within the school and with the other high school in the district, and curriculum coordinators oversee the vertical articulation with the sending schools. All high school curricula are being rewritten using a five-year revision cycle. Department chairs and teachers representing both high schools in math, English, and science have been at the forefront of the revision process and their curricula are close to completion. Other departments have plans to follow the common format adopted by these three departments and intend to start their revisions beginning this school year. Using time allotted during the summer and during after school hours and early release time on Thursdays, teachers from Platt High School and Maloney High School have met by grade level to revise their curricula using the Ainsworth formats as their common templates. The curriculum coordinators helped ensure the curriculum was articulated with the middle schools. The district uses SharePoint to store all curricular documents, pacing guides, overviews, and related materials, which helps keep articulation between buildings clear. While the focus is currently on revision of the high school curriculum, some articulation has taken place between the ninth grade teachers and the middle schools, but alignment is primarily handled by the district curriculum coordinators. As a result of the effective articulation between the two high schools and the district curriculum coordinators, the revision of the curriculum has been positive. While this has helped to ensure that high school students are provided with clear expectations in some of their coursework, the school is still working to effectively help students with a smooth transition from one school level to the

next through a comprehensive 6-12, and K-12 district-wide curriculum. (central office staff, school leadership, department leaders, teachers, self-study)

The community has shown a significant commitment to its schools through the referendum and budgeting process for the renovation of and addition to the Platt physical plant. Currently, though, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, and facilities are not adequate for the full implementation of the curriculum, including co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities; also, some cuts in budget and in staffing have resulted in the elimination of some programs, shortcomings in the resources of the library/media center, and difficulties in some areas of scheduling. Platt High School has experienced a reduction in staffing levels and over the last three years there has been a zero percent budget increase. Additionally, there has been a 10.1 percent increase in enrollment, resulting in some large class sizes; this is particularly the case in physical education, in which class sizes rose to 40 students per class. This was recently addressed with the hiring of an additional staff member. Although Meriden has experienced a reduction in budget allocations for instructional supplies and technology, the district has written grants to compensate for these losses. Technology such as SMARTBoards, iPads, and document cameras have been integrated into some curricula, and there are seven computer labs used for general classroom use and instruction in career/technical department courses. There are some shortages in the number of available textbooks and novels, but these items are typically prioritized for the next school year's budget. The district has provided for credit-recovery opportunities for students in need. As the physical layout of the library contains two levels, and as the library staffing has been reduced, it is not possible for the single professional on staff to supervise both

levels, which negatively impacts the school's ability to utilize the space efficiently. There is also a lack of sufficient funding for print and non-print resources and for equipment maintenance and repair. Though the community and district work diligently to provide grant-supplied funding to the school, the lack of dependable funding negatively affects the school's ability to fully implement and support its needs in instructional supplies, staffing, and curricular and co-curricular programs. (central office personnel, self-study, classroom observations, school leadership, teachers, department leaders)

The district provides sufficient personnel, time, and financial support for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research. The director of curriculum is responsible for all curricular coordination and articulation. Two secondary coordinators work to coordinate and articulate curricula between the high schools and middle schools. District coordinators check in with department heads and teachers frequently, particularly as curriculum revision is in progress. At the end of each school year, teachers collaborate to discuss revisions to the curriculum. The district provides teacher curriculum writers with release time during the school year and paid time during the summer to conduct discussions with peers and department heads. Teachers in the Meriden school district access all curricular materials using SharePoint software. Guiding publications for best practice research have included *Data Teams*, *Common Formative Assessments*, *Making Standards Work*, *Power Standards*, and *Unwrapping the Standards*. Regular meeting times have been devoted to data teams that measure content-specific skills as well as 21st century skills. Common summative midterms and finals have been developed and implemented and a district focus on common formative assessments has been established.

Therefore the district's provisions of sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for collaborative curriculum development, evaluation, and revision have allowed for effective revision in some curricular areas. (school leadership, central office personnel, self-study, teacher interview, teachers, department leaders)

Commendations

1. The district's commitment to funding curriculum revision
2. The open coordination and articulation in curriculum revision between and among departments, the two high schools, and sending middle schools
3. The implementation of a curriculum to guide the freshman academy experience
4. The provision of time and resources in support of curriculum revision
5. The plans for major facilities improvements to support the fulfillment of curriculum and the school's core values and beliefs about learning

Recommendations

1. Ensure that the curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations
2. Ensure that all courses are guided by a curriculum that emphasizes inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking strategies
3. Continue and complete the current work to ensure that the curriculum is written in a common format that emphasizes depth of understanding and includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, skills, and best-practice instructional strategies, and assessments that include use of the school-wide rubrics
4. Align classroom instruction with curriculum documents that include reference to the school's 21st century learning expectation.
5. Ensure dependable funding to support appropriate staffing levels, maintenance of technology, and instructional supplies used to implement 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

Conclusions

Instructional practices used by Platt High School teachers are examined, but are not strongly consistent with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. Teachers are familiar with the school's identified beliefs about learning and are engaged in reflective practices. The school has developed a schedule providing opportunities for teachers to collaborate within content area data teams, 9th grade core subject teams, and departments. Teachers use this time to evaluate student work, plan interventions for at-risk students, and conduct parent meetings. However, all teachers do not consistently implement teaching practices clearly connected to core values and beliefs. During 70 observed periods of instruction, student higher order thinking was required 3 times, application and analysis skills were observed 41 times, and lower-order thinking skills of remembering and understanding were observed 26 times. In addition, the majority of observed classroom instruction was teacher-directed. Students were rarely required to demonstrate reflective learning in order to improve their performance. The school has made notable progress in this area over the past few school years. Once more teachers consistently implement teaching practices the require more rigorous thinking skills, the school will more fully realize its school's core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations. (classroom observations, teachers, administrators)

Platt High School instructional practices sometimes support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations through integrating technology, personalizing instruction, engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning, self-directing

learners, and engaging students in self-assessment and reflection. Survey results reveal that 85.9 percent of teachers indicates the use of personalized instruction while 38.5 percent of students agrees their teachers personalize instruction, indicating inconsistent use across all classes and levels. Students are rarely exposed to cross-disciplinary learning outside of the freshman academy. While some classes include specific connections across content areas, such as science and child development in which teachers collaborate on lessons surrounding the reproductive system, the majority of observed instruction was teacher-driven. Teachers sometimes placed students in cooperative groups during instruction, but infrequently directed students to develop and/or answer essential questions or use higher order thinking skills during group work. School-wide rubrics were developed for engaging students in self-assessment and reflection; however, in 70 classroom observations, the majority of classrooms (49/70) showed no evidence of rubric use and only 4 classrooms thoroughly integrated rubrics into the lessons. Sample student work shows minimal opportunities and requirements for self-assessment and reflection through the use of rubrics. Teachers involve some students in the use of technology such as iPads and SMARTBoards through research-based activities, using specific programs for note-taking and uploading student work to Internet-based educational sites, but this is most prevalent in Advanced Placement courses and not widespread and not all students have regular access to these types of technology available in the building. Additionally, technology is not consistently used to support higher order thinking skills and activities. As a result of these inconsistencies in teaching practices, some students may be impeded in their ability to effectively practice and develop the school's 21st century learning expectations.

While some teachers make concerted efforts to personalize instruction, the predominant mode of teaching is teacher-centered and/or whole-group. In 70 classroom observations, 35 class lessons showed no evidence of personalized instruction, 25 class lessons showed limited evidence, and 10 class lessons showed strong evidence. Thus, the teaching methods are not fully supporting the school's efforts to develop independent, creative, resilient learners and thinkers. (classroom observations, student work, student shadowing, students)

Teachers sometimes adjust their instructional practices and use formative assessments during instruction to provide students with support; however, the implementation of differentiated instructional strategies and purposeful group learning activities is inconsistent. Formative assessments are sometimes used to drive classroom lessons as a result of data team discussions. Teachers communicate with students regarding times they are available for extra-help sessions, and make themselves available for questions outside of school through email. While teachers use formative assessments and provide students with varied levels of support, once these practices are implemented consistently the instructional needs of all students will be met. (observations, student work, students)

Teachers, individually and collaboratively, sometimes improve their instructional practices by using student achievement data from a variety of summative assessments, examining student work, and engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practices. Current research and feedback from a variety of sources are sporadically used by teachers for the purposes of improving instructional practices. No specific evidence was observed or presented indicating the examination of current research as it relates to

best practices. Department meetings are used to discuss student data from the Meriden District Assessment (MDA), and teachers collaborate on increasing student achievement scores through improved instructional practices. Platt High School data teams examine results from formative assessments and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT), and teachers modify their teaching practices to meet student needs. School leaders engage in professional discourse focused on instructional practice at faculty meetings, and Platt's data teams meet twice a month. School-wide rubrics were created to provide feedback and allow students to self-reflect; however, out of 70 classes observed, 49 lessons did not use rubrics, 17 lessons used rubrics in a cursory way, and in 4 lessons, rubrics were thoroughly integrated into the lesson plan. Some teachers look at student work to improve their instructional practices. English teachers review writing folders with writing samples to guide them in improving instruction and to assist students in developing their writing skills, but evidence does not show that the same strategy is used in other subject areas. As a result, when teachers and leaders more consistently examine current research regarding best practices, the school will more effectively help students develop 21st century skills. (observations, students, teachers)

Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices. Over 83 percent of the staff at Platt High School has advanced degrees. During Thursday meetings, teachers are afforded the opportunity to have conversations with colleagues and to reflect on best practices. Administrators provide specific feedback to teachers and teachers are required to reflect on teaching practices through the yearly evaluation process. Teachers attend programs designed to improve instructional practices through the John Collins writing

program, but evidence shows limited use of the John Collins writing folders within core subjects other than in English. Although teachers receive some content-specific training, inconsistent implementation limits a teacher's ability to make instructional improvements as it relates to content-specific instructional practices. (teachers, administration, self-study)

Commendations:

1. The availability of innovative technology within AP courses to enhance instruction
2. School-wide collaboration time used for the purposes of reflection and improving instruction

Recommendations:

1. Ensure all students receive equal and frequent opportunities to practice and demonstrate the school's 21st century learning expectations
2. Ensure that all students experience teaching strategies that require them to think deeply, solve real-world problems, and use inquiry processes to explore multiple perspectives on their learning
3. Guarantee that teachers use results from formative and summative assessments to guide and personalize their selection of teaching methods
4. Design professional learning activities that require teachers and administrators to regularly review and implement the findings of educational research
5. Develop specific activities that consistently incorporate rigor and give all students multiple opportunities to use higher-order thinking skills, make cross-curricular connections, and demonstrate how their learning connects to the world beyond the classroom



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 and for Student Learning

Conclusions

Platt High School has developed school-wide rubrics to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations, but has not developed a continuous or formal process for measuring student fulfillment of those expectations. A growing number of staff members use the school-wide analytic rubrics when assessing student work, but currently no stated school-wide policy exists for their frequency of use. Additionally, many parents are not familiar with the 21st century learning expectations. Once the school develops and implements a formal continuous assessment process the school will know the level of student and whole school achievement of the expectations. (parents, Endicott survey, teacher interview)

Platt High School's professional staff does not yet report to students, their families, and the school community individual or school-wide progress in achieving the 21st century learning expectations. Eight times per year (four progress reports, four report cards), teachers formally communicate individual student academic progress through letter grades and through mandatory comments, which teachers can select from a list or compose themselves. However, the 21st century learning expectations have not been integrated into these or other reports. The school-wide analytic rubrics have not yet become a part of the formal reporting process, although methods for sharing individual and school-wide progress on them are being explored. Thus, students, their families, and the Platt community are not yet regularly apprised of how well students are achieving their 21st century learning expectations. (parents, teachers, self-study)

Platt High School's professional staff regularly collects, disaggregates, and analyzes a variety of data, and sometimes responds to inequities in student achievement. Early-release Thursdays allow time for 100 percent teacher participation in data teams to review data from standardized tests (CAPT, PSAT, NOCTI), share student work, and discuss student performance on common formative assessments and common summative assessments. Social studies teachers have reviewed students' performance on the CAPT Reading for Information assessment to determine specific types of errors students were making and to develop and revise assessments that target specific reading skills. Career and technical education teachers have responded to data from the NOCTI (National Occupational Competency Testing Institute), and have created assessments to ensure that all students understand content-specific vocabulary. Math teachers review student work and performance on the Meriden district assessment to identify inequities in student performance, and to identify specific students for the Math Enhancement program or for additional help with the math tutor during study halls or regular class time.

In other content areas, evidence of ways in which professional staff respond to data is less clear. English teachers collect samples of student writing in portfolios throughout their four years at the high school, but there is no formal or consistent procedure in place to assess those portfolios. However, the school does not currently ensure that these analyses are done in light of its own 21st century expectations for learning. At present, while a variety of data is collected and analyzed, once all departments use a consistent, systematic method to respond to and remedy inequities in student achievement, the school's ability to eliminate those inequities will be increased. (teachers, self-study, school support staff)

Platt High School teachers do not yet communicate the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals regularly and systematically prior to all units of study. While these expectations are posted in every classroom, and many teachers post daily specific learning goals, 52.2 percent of staff reports communicating those expectations or explaining those goals prior to each unit, and this is affirmed by 59.6 percent of students and 57.6 percent of parents. Teachers have not yet consistently integrated the language of the rubrics into their classroom assessments, but this is encouraged and the rubrics are beginning to become a part of the Platt school culture. Since there is inconsistent communication of 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals, students may be unclear about the criteria on which they will be assessed in each unit of study and how this contributes to their overall progress toward fulfilling these expectations. (Endicott survey, parents, students)

Many Platt High School teachers provide students with corresponding rubrics prior to summative assessments. Teachers in most content areas include school-wide, departmental, course or assignment-specific rubrics with instructions for most assessments, although rubrics have not yet been created for all types of assessments. However, some teachers introduce rubrics during or after the summative assessment, including them as part of test directions or returning rubrics with completed and graded student work. While rubrics are often given to students prior to a summative assessment, teachers are still developing competency in using them effectively. Students are generally clear about what is expected of them on most classroom assessments despite the inconsistent implementation of school-wide and assignment-specific rubrics. Once the

school guarantees that all teachers consistently reference the school-wide rubrics prior to summative assessments, its ability to fully assess the 21st century learning expectations will be enhanced. (students, teachers, Endicott survey,)

Some Platt High School teachers employ a range of formative assessment strategies in most units of study. However, many rely on a limited number of strategies for both formative and summative assessments. Teachers informally assess student understanding through conversations, observations, and check-ins at the close of class. The adoption of a “no zero” policy is part of a district-wide culture of allowing and encouraging students to retake, edit, and revise work. Teachers have individual guidelines for giving students multiple opportunities to rework assignments if they have done poorly. Assessment strategies include PowerPoint or poster presentations, surveys, performances of monologues, journaling, or use of social networking, but many teachers rely on worksheets and graphic organizers for formative assessment. Written tests comprise the majority of summative assessments: multiple choice, matching, sentence completion, and short answer being the predominant formats. Some teachers collect, display, and use exemplars of student work for assignments and projects. While there are some teachers at Platt High School who employ a range of assessment strategies, the variable nature of this practice results in an inequity in students’ abilities to demonstrate what they know and can do across all content areas. (student work, students, parents, student shadowing)

Although teachers collaborate in formal ways to analyze student work and assessment results, not all teachers formally collaborate in the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments. The

district implements the district-wide Meriden district assessment (MDA) and uses the results from these assessments to adjust curricula and instructional practices. To varying degrees of frequency and fidelity, teachers use school-wide analytic rubrics to assess students, but the school-wide analytic rubrics themselves are not regularly examined. As a result, it is not known to what extent current formative, summative and common assessments are meeting student needs. (data teams, self- study, central office personnel)

Many teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work. Informal feedback for the purpose of revising and improving work primarily occurs as teachers circulate the classroom and provide immediate verbal feedback, which most frequently occurs as checks for understanding. Fewer teachers provide written feedback that is specific and designed to improve future student work. In differing ways, teachers sporadically review results of summative assessments to provide feedback to students prior to beginning a new unit of study. As a result, some students benefit from instruction that is driven by formative and summative assessments in which teachers are highly invested. (classroom observations, student work samples, students)

Most departments regularly use common formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning. A few teachers use student surveys as feedback to inform their instruction. Teachers meet in data teams to discuss common assessments. The math department uses the Meriden district assessment results to identify gaps in achievement and to plan instructional strategies to address these gaps. The social studies department has created department-level assessments focused on Reading for Information. This department uses the results from these assessments to

identify student errors from which they adjust their instruction. A school-wide committee develops a series of Reading for Information assessments which can be used across content areas. The science department meets three times a year with Maloney High School science teachers to review assessment data which is used to refine and “prune” their curriculum. As a result, most departments have developed formal common formative assessments and adjust instruction accordingly. (department leaders, self-study teachers, central office personnel)

On a varied basis, 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 student work, common course and common grade-level assessments, data from sending schools, and standardized assessments. However, teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, rarely examine the following for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice: individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school’s 21st century learning expectations, data from receiving schools and post-secondary institutions, and survey data from current students and alumni. Teachers are provided time to collaborate as school-based departments and district-level departments to analyze results of school-based assessments and the Meriden district assessments. Several departments have revised curriculum to address CAPT skills. Since the full range of evidence is not examined, the revision of curriculum and improvement of instructional practice may not adequately meet the needs of all students. (department heads, self-study, central office personnel)

Grading and reporting practices are not regularly reviewed and revised to ensure

alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. Teachers' grading policies and grading criteria vary by teacher both individually and among departments. No school-based system exists for teachers to ensure that grading practices are consistent within all subject areas, among all teachers and across all curricular areas. The district's "no zero policy" is a recent change in grading policy and aligns to the spirit of the school's core values and beliefs. Consequently, the equity and value of students' grades is limited and may not align to the school's core values and beliefs about learning.

(teachers, students, self-study)

Commendations

1. Establishment of early-release Thursdays to allow time for teachers to collaborate regularly for the purpose of improving student achievement
2. Use of common formative assessment to inform and adapt instruction for the purpose of improving student learning
3. The district-wide implementation of a no-zero policy affording students opportunity to revise and retake work

Recommendations

1. Develop and implement a procedure for the measurement of individual and school-wide progress on 21st century learning expectations.
2. Communicate, as appropriate, information on individual student and group progress toward achieving the targeted level of performance on the school-wide rubrics to students, their families, and the school community at large
3. Ensure that each student experiences a variety of assessment formats in each course
4. Improve use of collaborative time to include the analysis and revision of formative and summative assessments connected with the school's 21st century expectations for student learning
5. Clearly communicate relevant 21st century learning expectations to students prior

to each unit of study

6. Establish a process to review grading practices, ensuring consistency and connection to the school's 21st century expectations for student learning

Support of Teaching and Learning Standards

School Culture and Leadership

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning



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

Conclusions

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 and pride. Student, parent and teacher handbooks reflect high expectations for all students specifically with regard to dress code and attendance policies. Recently revised procedural and rule changes were aligned with the school's core values and beliefs about academic, social, and civic performance. In these revisions the school decided to detain students who were late to school in the cafeteria for the entire first period. Teachers and administrators strongly believe that this has reduced tardiness and supports their high expectations for student behavior. The practice does, however, result in the loss of additional instructional time for the tardy students. At the beginning of the school year, the principal addressed the students and emphasized the importance of attendance. As issues have arisen during the school year, he has addressed the student body about concerns. In the 2011-2012 school year there were 1,041 disciplinary actions reported at Platt High School. Four of those violations were acts of vandalism, which longitudinal data indicate to be similar to actions in previous years.

Efforts have been made to develop programs to improve school climate. A small number of male students has been involved with the developing tomorrow's professionals club, in which men of color develop skills in professional decorum and presentation. The school culture and climate committee and school-wide data team examine and discuss annual data regarding disciplinary actions. Involvement with a national-level robotics

team is a source of pride for the entire school community. Therefore, all in the school community cooperate to make the climate at Platt a safe, positive, respectful, supportive and inclusive learning environment. (self-study, facility tour, teachers, school leadership)

The school is making efforts to be a place of equity, inclusivity, and heterogeneity, however the school does not guarantee that every student over the course of his / her high school experience is enrolled in a minimum of one heterogeneously grouped core course (English/language arts, social studies, math, science, or world languages). The previous five-level course structure has been phased out and replaced with two college preparatory academic levels (in addition to Advanced Placement). Collapsing levels from five to two has reduced tracking and allows students to be grouped more heterogeneously. This move has created a more equitable learning environment than existed previously. The collapsed levels have provided students with the opportunity to take numerous courses during their high school experience that are more heterogeneously grouped. However, no core department offers a completely heterogeneous course that all students are required to take for graduation. While strong progress has been made in this area, several courses have student demographics that are sharply different from the school's overall demographics of 65 percent non-white and 57 percent free/reduced-price lunch. During the 2012-2013 school year, after collapsing the academic levels, 66 percent of Algebra 2 academic students is classified as non-white and 73 percent as living below the poverty level. In the Algebra 2 accelerated course 46 percent of students is listed as non-white and 37 percent as living below the poverty level. These statistics show progress toward making demographics of these levels of study more commensurate with those of the community at-large. In support of equity, district funds

cover the cost of all PSAT, ECE, and AP testing fees. The school's program of studies guide does have a clearly defined nondiscrimination policy that is designed to ensure that all students have equal educational opportunities, but this guide does not identify heterogeneous grouping by demographic indicators. While improvement has been made in reducing homogeneously grouped core academic courses by collapsing levels, observations indicate that some academic courses are not demographically representative of the city's diverse population. Therefore, Platt High School is not able to ensure that all students will experience at least one course that is fully equitable, inclusive and heterogeneous. (self-study, school leadership, classroom observations).

Advisory is a formal, ongoing program through which each student routinely meets with an adult in the school other than his or her school counselor. This adult knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. A weekly, twenty-minute advisory meeting has been implemented to connect all students to an adult member of the faculty for all years of the student's high school experience with an average student-to-teacher ratio of 12:1. Lesson plans with topics including confidence-building, academic success, goal setting, choices, bullying, responsibility, school spirit, study skills, organization, conflict resolution, community service, and college selection are provided to the advisory teachers for discussion and completion during advisory meetings. Advisory endeavors to engage students in meaningful and relevant conversations concerning educational and life skills. Teaching practices in advisory have been inconsistent among different members of the faculty. Thus, advisory creates an opportunity for students to develop a relationship with an adult member of the school community and acquire skills in 21st century learning expectations.

(students, self-study, teachers)

The principal and professional staff engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning; use resources outside of school to maintain currency with best practices; dedicate formal time to implement professional development; and apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment in some areas. Students are released early every Thursday to create time for teachers to focus on formal reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning. An agreement was reached with the teachers' union to restructure instructional time to create this professional collaboration opportunity without reducing instructional time. During this scheduled time teachers meet in data teams and are expected to review the quality of student work through common assessment, instructional practices, and assessment. The practice of meeting in this forum has been in place since spring 2012. Principals and professional staff have received training in the implementation of data teams by attending workshops with the Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative. Faculty members have been encouraged to read the book *Mindset* by Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D as a professional reading. Effort has been made to collaborate with the faculty of Maloney High School (the other high school in the city) to ensure that students who transfer between these schools are following a similar program of study. The population of the city is described as transient and collaboration helps to ensure that students who move are afforded equal educational opportunities. A partnership with the 3M Corporation and the pursuit of grant money has provided funds for SMARTBoards, iPads, and other pieces of technology that are actively used to support teaching and learning. Teachers attend training sessions that

develop 21st century skills and improve instructional practices. Some students regularly use iPads for instruction in some accelerated, AP, and ECE history courses and SMARTBoards are regularly used in some math and science courses. While formal time has been allocated to encourage responsive teaching and professional development, the school is not able to ensure that the discourse that takes place during this time is strongly and purposefully connected to its core values, beliefs, and 21st century expectations for student learning. (self-study, teacher interviews, classroom observations, student shadowing).

Building administration and leaders in general use research-based evaluation and supervision processes which improve student achievement and professional development. The district created a teacher evaluation and professional development plan in 2010 (revised in 2011) which allows for thorough and consistent feedback for the purpose of improving student achievement. The evaluation process includes formal and informal observation, and self-reflection, which aligns student-learning objectives to school improvement plans, district initiatives and Connecticut's common core of teaching. Building administrators attend workshops and professional development including the Connecticut accountability for learning initiative (CALI) and the center for school change focused on teacher evaluation. All teachers are required to develop an objective aligned with school-wide rubrics, district goals, 21st century learning expectations, core values and beliefs. Evaluators assess faculty based on teaching performance, competencies, job responsibilities and objectives, which are reviewed on an individual basis. As reported, 58.7 percent of faculty agrees that supervisors who are responsible for evaluating their teaching play an important role in improving instructional strategies. No data have been

collected for whole-school teaching performances, although data are collected through data teams. Data are collected through observations, evaluation, self-reflection and student work, which staff uses to analyze teaching practices. Department data teams have been asked to collect data to modify lesson plans, teaching styles and assessments to meet the learning objectives and observer's recommendations, which support efforts to improve student achievement. Therefore, while student achievement data does not yet show a link between the teacher evaluation protocol and improved student achievement, the school's teachers benefit from a generally effective system of support for and assessment of their practice. (self-study, school leadership, teachers, Endicott survey)

The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and it attempts to meet the learning needs of all students. A recent review of the master schedule has led to the elimination of homeroom, a lengthened school day with more instructional minutes, and collaboration time for teachers to enhance student learning. The school's schedule is a traditional rotating schedule on all days except Thursday. On this day students are released early to accommodate formal collaboration time for the instructional staff. Instructional time is not lost for students and, in fact, is extended by the faculty's agreement to use wrap-around time to extend periods in the schedule when compared to the former schedule. Athletes waiting for practice and other students involved in a co-curricular activity on this early release day are assigned to attend a supervised study hall to make constructive use of the time created by the early release. The rotating schedule facilitates some students' choice to attend afternoon classes at the Hartford Academy of the Arts. There are few laboratory periods that foster inquiry-based instruction. Smaller learning

communities have been created to support and enhance student personalization. These include the freshman academy and weekly advisory. Freshman academy and the freshman teaming model allow ninth graders to have meeting times with their team teachers to discuss individual progress. Freshman academy meetings are held every Monday with the administration, and the three academies meet together every Thursday to discuss objectives and instructional goals. The freshman team model effectively unites teachers into teams and fosters interdisciplinary learning for students.

A weekly advisory meeting occurs each week between a small group of students and one assigned adult who continues with that group throughout the students' high school career. The average student-to-teacher ratio for these advisory groups is 12:1. The school provides opportunities for students who can be better served in school programs to meet at alternate times outside of the traditional school day. The Daytime Credit Program allows young mothers to attend school for three hours in the morning or three hours in the afternoon to meet the needs of their demanding schedule. The Credit Diploma Program is a night school for students who are at least 17 years of age and who are not able to successfully complete a traditional school program. As a result of the organization of time, the research-based instruction, and the collaboration among teachers, the structure is in place for the learning needs of all PHS students to be adequately met. (self-study, school leadership, central office personnel).

Student load and class size inconsistently enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. The collapsing of five levels to two levels has created a more diverse spectrum of learning styles and needs in the classroom, which require instructional strategies to become more differentiated and personalized. Not all teachers

have yet made this transition in their practice. There is an inconsistency in the number of students placed in academic, accelerated and AP classes in the areas of science, math, history, and world languages. Once the school more effectively balances class size and teacher load, teachers' will be aided in ensuring that they meet the learning needs of all students. (self-study, students, staff, master schedule, Endicott survey)

The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The principal is highly visible in the building and often engages students in conversation in the hallway and cafeteria. Recognizing the core value that school faculty, family, and members of the community are all important players in the educational process, Alert Now was purchased to improve parent notification and to foster involvement in school events. Statements of the school's core values and beliefs are posted in many classrooms and at strategic locations throughout the school building. The principal has a schedule of formal meetings with school and district leaders to help ensure that decisions reflect the school's core values and beliefs. The principal makes important decisions in consultation with other educational leaders, the school resource officer, and staff, and communicates decisions using email or, in cases of specific need, by convening the school community in a whole-school meeting. For example, a tragic incident in the local community resulted in the death of one town teenager, and although the teenager was not a student at the school, the principal, in consultation with other leaders, recognized that this death may impact some of the school's students. A school-wide meeting was convened to address this issue. The principal has established a policy whereby students who are late to school report to the cafeteria and are held out of the entirety of the first period. Students subsequently

receive an unexcused absence for this period. This policy has reduced disruptions in the hallways and classrooms during the first period, has improved an existing tardiness issue, and has ensured that students who are punctual do not have their learning negatively impacted by frequent disruptions. Although students who are held out of first period for tardiness receive an unexcused absence and are afforded the opportunity to make up missed work, they do miss significantly more instructional time than if they had been admitted to class late.

The principal encourages and facilitates active involvement among staff members regarding the development and implementation of instructional initiatives. Teachers feel that there is a shared ownership of the instructional process. The principal reinforces the importance of the academic, social, and behavioral expectations through a reward system called positive behavior intervention and support. Academic success and achievement are celebrated and publicized on the school website and on television monitors at certain locations within the school building. The school's core values and beliefs are displayed prominently throughout the school, but the students lack a clear understanding of how these values and beliefs provide a focus for the school's instructional program and culture. Therefore, while the principal provides effective instructional leadership, he is still working to ensure that all members of the school community embrace the core values and beliefs as a focus for their daily educational experience. (self-study, teachers, school leadership, student shadowing).

Teachers, students and parents are sometimes involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership and this is a trend that is growing at the school. Multiple programs are in place for staff, students, and

parents to be involved in the decision-making process although many members in each group do not feel involved. Out of 88 parents (less than 10 percent of Platt families), 54.1 percent feels that they have an opportunity to be involved in important decisions made at the school. Thirty-one percent of students feels they have input in school decisions. Twenty-seven percent of teachers feels that teachers, students and parents collectively are meaningfully involved in the decision-making process to promote an atmosphere of responsibility and ownership. Teachers participate in staff, department and parent/teacher meetings and on the school culture and climate committee to make important decisions in the school. Teachers are generally receptive to decisions made by a group of peers. Students serve as liaisons to the board of education, school culture and climate committee, and student senate, although many students do not feel they have an opportunity to be a part of the decision-making process. Parents have opportunities to attend open houses, parent/teacher conferences, school governance council, and booster clubs. Parents, administrators, and staff agree there is a lack of parental involvement at the high school and in the overall school community. The school has made efforts to engage more parents through the use of the automated phone system, media ads, the school's webpage, and letters, but have had limited success. As a result, while teachers, parents, and students are given opportunities to be involved in decision-making processes for the school, a shared sense of ownership has not yet been developed across all stakeholder groups. (self-study, parents, Endicott survey, staff, students)

Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to the increase in students' engagement in learning. Faculty members serve on committees, participate in regularly scheduled meetings centered on student achievement,

and make staff presentations during professional development and faculty meetings. These efforts are directed toward the improvement of the school and the instructional program. Some teachers take on leadership roles by actively volunteering time to such events as Project Excel and the honor roll banquet, nominating students for Student of the Month, and decorating the school's showcases with information about their subject areas. Some teachers have attended workshops and other professional development activities that have helped them to incorporate technology and 21st century skills into their instruction. These efforts are directed toward increasing student engagement in learning. Teachers believe that they have shared ownership of instructional decision-making. The faculty support and rally around the positive behavior intervention and supports program. This program has helped to improve the overall climate and life of the school by rewarding and reinforcing examples of positive behavior. Teachers are proud of Platt High School. A considerable number of the instructional and administrative personnel are graduates of this high school providing evidence of commitment to improving the educational experience that is offered. Therefore, teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and work to increase students' engagement in learning. (self-study, teacher interviews, classroom observations).

The Board of Education (BOE), superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. The BOE and superintendent have created an environment in which the building principal can make decisions and collaborate on professional development to promote student success. The BOE, superintendent, and principal have collaborated on high school initiatives developed by the principal and building

administrators to increase student achievement. The principal collaborated with BOE and the superintendent to purchase Mindset, a book designed to inspire educational reflection, for all faculty members. Rachel's challenge was brought to the school to communicate with the faculty and students about bullying in student lives. Therefore, the Board of Education, superintendent, and principal have collaborated together to be open, reflective, and constructive in support of achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. (principal, central office personnel, self-study)

The BOE and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. The BOE gives the superintendent and principal latitude to implement policies and guidelines through procedures specific to the needs of the building. District leaders and the school board seek the wisdom of the principal with regard to important policy and budgetary decisions that impact the school. The principal supports teaching and learning needs by discussing budgetary requests with educational leaders in all academic departments. Therefore, the principal has been granted sufficient autonomy to effectively lead the school and to help all students achieve their learning expectations. (self-study, school board, central office personnel).

Commendations:

1. The collaboration that exists between the Board of Education, superintendent, principal, and staff members
2. The efforts made to increase heterogeneity in core academic subjects by reducing leveling
3. The implementation of a freshman teaming model that promotes interdisciplinary learning for students
4. The allocation of time in the schedule to engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning

5. The implementation of 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 can facilitate his/her achievement of the 21st century expectations for learning

Recommendations:

1. Ensure that each student experiences a core subject course that is heterogeneously grouped
2. Increase involvement of parents and students involvement in decisions affecting student learning



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

Conclusions

Platt 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. A cross-disciplined team of professionals from within the school and with representatives from several community agencies work together to provide early intervention strategies for all students including those who have been identified as exhibiting at-risk behavior(s). This team, known as the student assistance program, is charged with assessing a student's needs and recommending actions that may include academic modifications or assistance, individual or group counseling, mentoring and/or referrals to special education or a variety of outside agencies. Referrals (which consistently encourage parental input and involvement) are made to the student assistance program by school personnel, family members, friends, outside agencies or the students themselves.

In addition to the student assistance program, Platt High School has a wide range of student support services. They include academic resources, school counseling, health, community outreach, student support and special education. In order to coordinate between and among these resources and personnel, meetings, personal contact, software and school forms are used for tracking and communication purposes.

This year, to assist in the transition of middle school students to high school, Platt High School has instituted the freshman academy to assist all students entering high school in meeting the school's 21st century learning expectations. Consequently, the Platt

High School student population and their parents/guardians are strongly supported in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, student assistance program, faculty, school administration)

Platt High School provides information to families, including those most in need, about available student support services. The school makes deliberate attempts to communicate available student support services to students and families who are most in need of them. All families have access to attendance and grades through PowerSchool's Parent Portal. The school utilizes mail, email (including Gmail accounts for all students), the school website, newsletters, a public access television station, and school meetings to disseminate information to families. The Alert Now phone system delivers important messages. There is, however, a defined need for more outreach to non-English speaking parents, as 28.6 percent of students comes from a home where English is not the primary language spoken. Registration forms are generally available in Spanish, but much of the communication (newsletters, message board, Alert Now) coming directly from the high school is transmitted in English only.. Data has been collected through event surveys (ie, college fair), to inform the planning of services, although the feedback gathered from these surveys is limited to those who participate. Therefore, while the school does provide various means of communication to inform families, the lack of a multi-lingual format negatively impacts the school's ability to communicate with all parents and to meet the needs of all students. (self-study, parents, teachers)

Platt High School's support services staff is using technology in a limited way to deliver a range of services for each student. PowerSchool provides an effective means of electronic communication among teachers, school counselors, students and parents, and

allows for access to grade and attendance data, and is used course selection. The school's program of studies is available on the school website. The school also provides Career Cruising, a web-based software program which provides career exploration and planning. The special education department utilizes IEP Direct to manage student individual education plans. The Meriden district administrative team utilizes Inform, a web-based program which monitors test scores. This information is shared with the Platt High School staff and supports student placement in core academic courses. Assistive technologies are implemented effectively as per each student's individual education plan. Although support services staff use these varied technology tools to coordinate services for students, the data are presently used in a reactive rather than a proactive way. Thus, technology adequately supports the support services staff members and the students they serve. (self-study, teacher interviews, department leader)

Platt High School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling, engage in individual meetings with all students, deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers, and use ongoing relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Platt's school counseling services have an adequate ratio of certified/licensed personnel and support staff to students. Currently, there are four guidance counselors and one director of guidance. Each of the four guidance counselors has a caseload of approximately 270 students. The director of guidance has a caseload of 60 students along with her other

duties. Working closely with the guidance department is one school psychologist and one school social worker. The amount of time individual counselors spend on one-to-one meetings with individual students ranges from two to eight visits per year dependent upon the student's grade level. Each session lasts between 20-45 minutes.

Platt counselors meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling. Counselors spend approximately 10 percent of their time with course selection, 50 percent of their time with personal counseling, 15 percent of their time with post-high school planning, 15 percent of their time working with special educational services, 1 percent of their time with group counseling and 9 percent of their time dealing with crisis intervention. The guidance department has an open-door policy allowing students to drop in if a counselor is available. Students also have the option of using a sign-up sheet to schedule an appointment should the need arise. In some cases guidance counselors do engage in group meetings but on a very limited basis and not with all students.

Platt counselors deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers. Several guidance counselors, the school social worker, the school psychologist, other support staff personnel, and various other school staff are members of the student assistance program set up specifically to collaborate and refer students to other outside services when needed. In addition, the Platt High School population has the benefit of on-site personnel from the community health center. This includes a licensed therapist, a part-time nurse practitioner, and a part-time dental hygienist. In conjunction with the on-site community health center staff, representatives from area community services are also part of the student assistance

program, which serves to ensure that outside services are available to all students in need.

Platt High School does not have a written developmental guidance program. However, the counselors do utilize the 2008 comprehensive school counseling program development guide as a reference. The counselors do not use ongoing, relevant assessment data at this time to improve services ensuring each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. Their use of group meetings is very limited at this time, and it is not with all students. Therefore, while in most cases achievements have been made in this area, the lack of a written developmental program, lack of ongoing assessment data use, and little to no group counseling does not ensure a steady growth of improvement for counseling services for all students to achieve 21st century learning expectations. (school board, self-study, teachers, department leaders)

Platt 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. Platt's health services provide for mandated health screenings for grades 9 – 12, maintain school health records for all enrolled students according to mandates, and refer students to the outside medical community as appropriate. The staff also administers prescribed medications, treatments, and specialized care. To perform these duties Platt High School has one full-time registered nurse and one part-time health aide who works closely with the registered nurse in the health suite.

Besides the personnel provided to the school by the Meriden health department, the school also has the advantage of on-site staff from the community health center including a nurse practitioner, licensed therapist, and dental hygienist. This collaboration between and among the parties involved in providing health services to the Platt community has greatly amplified the types of services available. In order to participate in the ancillary services provided by the community health center, each student must obtain parental permission.

In order to improve services by using ongoing assessment data, the school nurse provides a monthly report which eventually comprises an annual report of all the schools in the district. This report is then analyzed to identify trends and to develop strategies to attain the goals according the healthy 2020 plan the district has set for itself. As a result of these initiatives, Platt is able to ensure services that will support each student as he or she strives to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (school support staff, self-study, school leadership)

Library/media services are not integrated into curriculum and instruction practices and do not have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff. The library media specialist is not engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum, as he is not a member of the curriculum planning teams, nor a member of the department data teams. The media specialist attempts to employ outreach, such as email and a newsletter, to encourage use of the library's resources. Collaboration is a challenge, as the library media specialist is the sole library staff member within the school. Prior to 2005, Platt employed two library media specialists and one library clerk. One of the library media positions was cut in 2004, and the library clerk position was cut in the

spring of 2011. As the physical layout of the library contains two levels, and the library staffing has been reduced, it is not possible to supervise both levels and to ensure student safety. This negatively impacts the school's ability to utilize the space efficiently, and the first floor is now used mainly as a meeting space and computer lab. There is a lack of sufficient funding for print and non-print resources and for equipment maintenance and repair. The library supports the independent learning needs of the small number of students who access its resources, and includes those students who access the library during study hall or through collaborative projects. Recent funding for technology initiatives has been spent on resources for the classroom, rather than in the library, although the library computers have software such as the Follett Destiny catalog, Audacity, Geometers sketchpad, Graphing software, M.S. office suite, Photostory 3, Picasa 3, Write to Learn and Moviemaker. The library media center webpage, accessible from the Platt home page, contains several online encyclopedias, a contemporary issues database, as well as Discovery Education's streaming video site. The school library/media center is open before, during, and after school, from 7:20am to 2:30pm daily. The lack of collaboration between the library media specialist and the curriculum and department data teams, and the reduction of library staff, make it difficult for the services of the library/media center to be integrated into the school's curriculum. (self-study, facility tour, teacher interviews, students)

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 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 to ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. In order to fulfill the needs of support services for identified students, including special education, section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, Platt High School has a sufficient variety and number of appropriately certified personnel. Collaboration among these personnel, in conjunction with regular education teachers is accomplished in a variety of ways. The student assistance program, planning and placement teams, and freshman academy are the three major vehicles by which all parties collaborate to ensure identified students have the opportunity to meet the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Inclusion classes at Platt High School have been concentrated in the core curriculum areas of math and English. Faculty and support staff came to a consensus that these two areas are most in need of inclusion. In order to fill the gaps in the other content areas of social studies and science, inclusion classes are offered on an as-needed basis as dictated by the students' IEPs. Otherwise, special education students, who are in regular education classes, obtain academic assistance in strategies classes or freshman seminar taught by a special education teacher.

Through the special education process, 504 meetings, and student assistance program much data are collected and used to improve the services to individual students. Evidence is lacking in data collection to allow for the improvements and streamlining of processes and procedures as a whole that assist identified students to achieve the school's 21st learning expectations. Therefore, identified students, including special education,

Section 504 of the ADA and English language learners (along with their parents or guardians) can be assured that the necessary supports are in place to afford them the opportunity of achieving the school's learning expectations for the 21st century. (panel presentation, teachers, school support staff, self-study)

Commendations:

1. Timely, coordinated and direct intervention strategies for all students
2. The variety and effectiveness of counseling services
3. The comprehensive health services provided by staff from the MBOE and community partners
4. The staffing levels of certified/licensed and support personnel for identified and at risk students
5. The various vehicles for collaboration among teachers, counselors, targeted services and other support personnel

Recommendations:

1. Ensure a level of staffing in the library media center that facilitates teacher and student use
2. Engage the library media specialist in instructional and curricular planning
3. Improve access to non-English communications for parents/guardians
4. Develop and implement a formal curriculum for the school counseling program
5. Use the practice of collecting and reporting data in the health office as a model to be replicated by other support services



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 engages 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

Conclusions

The community and the district's governing body have maintained an adequate level of funding for a wide range of school programs, personnel, services, ongoing professional development, technology support, curriculum revision, equipment, and instructional materials and supplies. However, this funding is not dependably kept pace with cost increases beyond the district's control. Three successive zero-increase budgets have negatively impacted educational quality and opportunity for students.

A wide variety of school programs and services are currently offered at Platt High School. The Advanced Placement and early college education offerings have been increased to eleven courses from seven during the 2009-2010 school year. That said, several programs have been lost in recent years due to budget constraints. Crafts, creative writing, German, French, textiles and interior design have been or are being phased out of the curriculum. In some cases the phase-out has been due to budget restrictions and others due to lack of enrollment.

Professional and support staff levels have been affected by budgetary decisions. Due to the three successive zero-increase budgets, seven full-time faculty members and several paraprofessionals have been cut through attrition. In that same time period, there has been a 10.1 percent increase in enrollment. This is partially responsible for the loss of some of the aforementioned classes. Additionally, the minimal staffing of some departments has led to some very large class sizes, particularly in PE, with close to 40 students per class. This will be addressed by hiring an additional staff member.

The school does a very good job funding ongoing professional development. Through negotiations with the teachers' union, early-release Thursdays were established. These weekly sessions are used for a variety of professional development purposes.

Platt High School demonstrates a range of technology in support of instruction. The budget for technology has remained relatively stable over the past few years. Additionally, every three years the director of technology, in cooperation with the district technology committee, develops a technology plan. This plan has allowed for the placement of SMARTBoards in designated departments, training for teachers in the use of educational software, and an implementation plan for wireless Internet access throughout the school. The technology plan is reviewed three times a year. Several grants have enhanced the technology available at the high school, including one that supplied iPads to an AP History class.

Though the high school has adequate levels of equipment, it is clear that many items need upgrading. The school community has found creative means by which to overcome this lack of resources—from fundraisers for cardio equipment, to inheriting home economic stoves, and through a grant for new equipment—but none of these are dependable funding sources.

The provision of instructional materials and supplies at the school is often inconsistent and tied to the district's level of funding. A five-year curriculum cycle concludes with the purchase of many new textbooks. Due to this, the budget for new textbooks in the 2011-2012 year was substantial. It is unclear if elective departments have benefited as much from the overall funding as have the major academic areas.

The teachers and administrators of Orville H. Platt, along with the Board of

Education and central office, have done an admirable job of creatively ensuring adequate funding over the past few years. Through use of state, federal and private grants, creativity, supportive bargaining units and fundraisers, they have found the resources to support some of the programs in need at the school. Many grants have expired, however, and there appears to be an over-reliance on the promise of the future building/renovation. Many teachers indicate that they are dissatisfied with the funding of programs, services, staff, instructional materials, supplies and equipment. However, the city has shown notable support for the school district through its approval of building reconstruction and renovation projects; including the one at Platt. Therefore, though the community and city government provide adequate funding to Platt High School, it is not dependable due to its reliance on grants. (self-study, budget documents, panel presentation, facility tour, teachers, school board, central office personnel, school leadership, strategic school profile Endicott survey)

Orville Platt High School adequately develops, plans, and funds programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant. The school maintains and replaces equipment when necessary, and provides a satisfactory daily level of building cleanliness while ensuring the health and well-being of all building occupants. The custodial staff consists of one head and eight custodians under his supervision. The Web Solutions software program is used by the school community to create work orders, except in case of emergency. A majority of teachers and parents agree that the school is clean and well-maintained.

Though major facility equipment is maintained and replaced, there is no formal repair or replacement plan in use. Rather, projects are prioritized in order of greatest need

as they arise and as finances allow. For instance, auto-scrubbers were purchased in the past few years to offset reduction in custodial staff. In some instances, grants have allowed the school to update equipment. At this time, the school facility equipment is not inventoried or catalogued on a yearly basis.

The Meriden health department inspects the pool and cafeteria monthly. Pest management control is also conducted on a monthly basis. Fire inspections are held annually. The high school utilizes an alarm system monitored by a private company to secure the premises during non-school hours. As a result of all these efforts, students are provided with a safe and clean environment in which to learn. (self-study, facility tour, teachers, students, school support staff, Endicott survey)

There is ongoing planning to address future programs, enrollment changes, staffing, facility, technology needs, and capital improvements. By October 1st of each year, the director of personnel develops a high school enrollment report that allows the school to address future programs and services to support the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. Every three years the director of technology, in cooperation with the district technology committee, develops a technology plan. This plan has allowed for the placement of SMARTBoards, training in the use of educational software, and an implementation plan for wireless Internet access throughout the school. This technology plan is reviewed three times a year. Faculty and staff have also had major input into long-range plans for the programs and services they offer. Their needs are expressed through the board-approved Educational Specifications for the new Orville H. Platt High School.

These reports inform the capital improvement plan developed by the Meriden

School District and approved by the city of Meriden. Municipal bond proposals are compiled annually by the city, which address how and when capital projects are funded. Currently, the Board of Education has embarked on a complete high school renovation and building project with an anticipated end date of 2018. In light of this project, the capital improvement plans for the past few years have been limited. Therefore, though the school and district provide ongoing planning to address future needs, the fact that these plans assume a high priority in the budgetary process may mean that more immediate needs of the Platt community go unaddressed. (self-study, teacher interview, teachers, school board, central office personnel, school leadership)

Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budgetary process. The budgetary process begins in the late fall with individual teachers receiving forms to indicate their initial needs for the following year. A final list is compiled by department chairs during departmental meetings. The department chairs then bring the requests to the weekly department chair meetings. The administrators bring these requests to the assistant superintendent by November. Once these requests are presented to and approved by the superintendent, the budget is presented to the Meriden Board of Education for extended discussion, review, and public hearings. Building faculty and administrators attend these public meetings and the superintendent has held meetings with school staff. The formal approval occurs in late March. The principal distributes received funds based on the demonstrated needs of each department. As such, teachers and building administrators play an active role in the budget process and this leads to greater empowerment of faculty and staff members in the direction of the school and its programs. (self-study, teachers, school board, central office

personnel, school leadership)

While the Orville H. Platt High School site and plant are quite old and in many cases near the end of their service life, they do promote and facilitate quality school programs and services, but these are not equitably distributed across disciplines. There are an adequate number of classrooms to support the delivery of minimal quality education. Other than physical education, there are no class sizes larger than 29 students.

There are, however, some notable deficiencies. The flooring in one gymnasium lacks adequate traction and is under-utilized; consequently, the other gymnasium can quickly reach its maximum occupancy. Some science classes do not have enough lab space for the number of students enrolled. Also, the physical design of the library consists of two levels and two computer labs. With only one certified library personnel, supervision, instruction, and assistance given in the library media center are limited.

Platt High School has three lunch waves, two of which overlap. The cafeteria/student dining services provide adequate space for students to have their meals. The food preparation area lacks a walk-in freezer which requires that food be stored elsewhere and delivered on regular basis. Lunch waves do not have equal distribution, which makes for longer waiting periods and overflow into the hallway.

Platt High School provides adequate administrative offices including one conference room and four private offices. The guidance suite offers a common area, eleven private offices, a career center, a conference room, and transition counselor office. The facility offers areas for support services including a therapist, a registered nurse, and a dental hygienist.

Platt High School provides 322 parking spaces on-site including nine that are

handicap accessible for professional staff, students, and visitors. In addition, 87 parking spaces are located at an overflow lot next to a nearby skate park. Buses and students access one main student drop off area. The following concerns exist relating to the outdoor space: insufficient parking for the faculty and students (students often choose to park illegally in non-designated parking areas), students who walk alongside the busy road from the overflow parking lot to the school site, and the lack of lighting on sidewalks.

The school has not been renovated recently but there is a plan in place for a comprehensive renovation and new construction. The school's faculty members recognize the need for a newer facility and are enthusiastic about the potential improvements that are predicted to occur as a result of the renovation.

Although adequate space is provided for quality education in some courses, the lack of universally appropriate space makes the high school's facilities insufficient for full implementation of 21st century curriculum across all subject areas. (self-study, students, faculty, school support staff)

The school maintains up-to-date documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet most applicable federal and state laws and are predominately in compliance with fire, health, and safety regulations. The school district's buildings and grounds department is responsible for maintaining all documentation and scheduling all required inspections from local, state, and federal agencies. The Board of Education contracts with servicing agencies to ensure compliance with all federal and state laws. The school, however, does not meet all ADA laws for accessibility, such as the width of classroom doors and elevator requirements. Likewise, the school is not in compliance

with current fire suppression codes as it does not have a sprinkler system or smoke detectors. Again, as with many other needs, these will be addressed in the renovation / reconstruction.

Improvements have been made in the past few years, such as two new bathrooms meeting ADA requirements, new fire doors, and new drain covers for the pool. The school has also recently installed a lift in the pool to make it handicapped accessible. Most students with mobility difficulties often have schedules that primarily use the first floor. There are strategically placed heat detectors and fire suppression units in the home economics and cafeteria areas. Fire alarms and fire extinguishers are located throughout the building. The new high school has been designed to meet all code requirements.

Work orders for maintenance and repairs are prepared online through the Web Mobility program. The system's operating budget includes a line-item to fund any identified issues resulting from inspections. The presidents of all bargaining units have formed a group that tours one school a month to assess conditions. Recommendations are forwarded to the custodians, building principals, and central office. Thus, though there is more of a reactive than a systemic plan to update/repair facilities and buildings, the result is a building that creates a satisfactorily safe and comfortable environment for student learning. (self-study, facility tour, teachers, students, school support staff, Endicott survey)

The school establishes programs to engage parents/families as partners in education. These programs include an annual parents' night held at the high school. Increased communication has not resulted in a commensurate increase of parent involvement/attendance. Those parents that do regularly participate do not reflect the

school demographic.

Events are advertised through the school's website, mailings, email, the local television station, and the school's sign. The school website has been newly updated and provides information on school policies, organizations, events, rubrics, and programs. A quarterly guidance newsletter is sent to families to ensure that parents are informed and included in school events and procedures. The guidance department organizes a college fair for all students in the district. The ninth grade team has developed strategies to utilize the email system to keep parents involved in their child's learning.

The school has implemented the use of PowerSchool to keep parents connected and involved with their child's progress in school. The district has also just employed the use of the Alert Now system to notify parents by phone of all important school events and notifications including school closings, delays, and attendance notifications.

The student/parent handbook is provided to every family at the beginning of the year as a resource for parents and families regarding all school procedures and policies, schedules and calendars, and contact information. Student agenda books are also given to all students as a form of communication.

The Platt High School student population includes 327 students who do not speak English at home. This comprises 28 percent of the school population. Although some notifications are provided in Spanish, outreach to non-English speaking parents remains a concern. With the exception of school registration forms and the statement of core values and beliefs, all school publications appear to be communicated in English. Therefore, once the professional staff more actively engages families, non-English speaking parents will be positively impacted by communication in their first language and thus more likely

to participate in their child's education. (parents, faculty, district administration, panel presentation, Endicott survey)

Platt High School develops productive community, business, and higher education partnerships and continues to improve efforts to produce effective parent partnerships. There are a myriad of formal business and industry partnerships offered at Platt including a community service graduation requirement, a job shadowing program, a lunch and learn program, a field trip program, a developing tomorrow's professionals program, college career pathways, transition expo and a formal relationships with Middlesex community college and the University of Connecticut.

Through Platt's partnership with Middlesex community college and UCONN, students have the opportunity to receive college credit. The career counseling pathways program (CCP) provides a wide range of classes to students. In addition, the CCP program provides money for professional development, tutors, and classroom supplies. These partnerships expose students to information regarding college admission and tuition. These programs also instruct and aid the career counselor in supporting students in preparation for life after graduation.

Students are required to complete twenty hours of community service at any non-profit organization prior to graduation. The school also maintains a working relationship with a large number of organizations in the surrounding community such as the Boys and Girls Club, Department of Human Services and Meriden Youth Services. (students, parents, staff, panel presentation, self-study)

Commendations

1. The Meriden community's support for its schools as evidenced by the approval of the new high school project
2. The wide variety of partnerships with local colleges and businesses which support the school's fulfillment of its core values and beliefs
3. The parent-communication strategies being employed in the freshman academy
4. The clean and orderly appearance of the school building, despite its age and need for renovation
5. The useful, newly updated school website

Recommendations

1. Ensure that classroom supplies, equipment, and space are sufficient to support students' equitable opportunities to achieve the school's 21st century expectations for learning
2. Ensure the renovation/reconstruction addresses all pertinent building code issues
3. During and after the school's renovation, provide reliable funding to ensure the maintenance of the building, infrastructure, and instructional programming

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 O.H. Platt 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 O.H. Platt 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 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 95. 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 wishes to extend a special recognition to the chairpersons of the steering committee for their attention to detail and diligence in providing excellent and thoughtful accommodations. These efforts certainly made the committees work more efficient and focused.

Appendices

Appendix A

Roster of Committee Members

Anthony J. Gasper, Ed.D.
Ansonia Public Schools
Ansonia, CT 06401

Karen Lapuk
Manchester High School
Manchester, CT 06040

Lisa Pasonelli
North Providence High School
North Providence, RI 02904

Barbara Lyons
Wilton High School
Wilton, CT 06897

Jason Adler
Waterford High School
Waterford, CT 06385

Martha Press
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Stratford, CT 06615

Julie Chevan
Amity Regional Senior High School
Woodbridge, CT 06525

Antonella Raschilla
Springfield High School
Springfield, MA 01109

Andrew Clapsaddle
Bristol Central High School
Bristol, CT 06011

Sarah Richards
Mt. Hope High School
Bristol, RI 02809

Sally Esposito
State Education Resource Center
Middletown, CT 06457

Lisa Sepe
Bulkely High School
Hartford, CT 06114

William Hakeem
Dartmouth High School
Dartmouth, MA 02747

Todd Zagurski
Killingly High School
Dayville, CT 06241

Roger Hansell
New Canaan High School
New Canaan, CT 06840

Appendix B

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

Appendix C

Summary of Commendations and Recommendations

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

COMMENDATIONS:

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

- The thoughtful and inclusive process used to draft the school's core values and beliefs
- The establishment of a Core Values Adherence Committee
- Demonstration of professionalism by staff and students as stated in core values and beliefs
- The school administration's efforts to unite the school community's understanding of the core values through the use of memorable acronyms such as PRIDE

Curriculum

- The district's commitment to funding curriculum revision
- The open coordination and articulation in curriculum revision between and among departments, the two high schools, and sending middle schools
- The implementation of a curriculum to guide the freshman academy experience
- The provision of time and resources in support of curriculum revision
- The plans for major facilities improvements to support the fulfillment of curriculum and the school's core values and beliefs about learning

Instruction

- The availability of innovative technology within AP courses to enhance instruction
- School-wide collaboration time used for the purposes of reflection and improving instruction

Assessment of and for Student Learning

- Establishment of early-release Thursdays to allow time for teachers to collaborate regularly for the purpose of improving student achievement
- Use of common formative assessment to inform and adapt instruction for the purpose of improving student learning
- The district-wide implementation of a no-zero policy affording students opportunity to revise and retake work

School Culture and Leadership

- The collaboration that exists between the Board of Education, superintendent, principal, and staff members
- The efforts made to increase heterogeneity in core academic subjects by reducing leveling
- The implementation of a freshman teaming model that promotes interdisciplinary learning for students
- The allocation of time in the schedule to engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning
- The implementation of 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 can facilitate his/her achievement of the 21st century expectations for learning

School Resources for Learning

- Timely, coordinated and direct intervention strategies for all students
- The variety and effectiveness of counseling services

- The comprehensive health services provided by staff from the MBOE and community partners
- The staffing levels of certified/licensed and support personnel for identified and at risk students
- The various vehicles for collaboration among teachers, counselors, targeted services and other support personnel

Community Resources for Learning

- The Meriden community's support for its schools as evidenced by the approval of the new high school project
- The wide variety of partnerships with local colleges and businesses which support the school's fulfillment of its core values and beliefs
- The parent-communication strategies being employed in the freshman academy
- The clean and orderly appearance of the school building, despite its age and need for renovation
- The useful, newly updated school website

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

- Integrate core values and beliefs and 21st century learning expectations in curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom
- Ensure participation on Core Values Adherence Committee is representative of the school and community demographics
- Ensure that the school-wide rubrics are aligned with measureable 21st century learning expectations

Curriculum

- Ensure that the curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations
- Ensure that all courses are guided by a curriculum that emphasizes inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking strategies
- Ensure that the curriculum is written in a common format that emphasizes depth of understanding and includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, skills, and best-practice instructional strategies, and assessments that include use of the school-wide rubrics
- Align classroom instruction with curriculum documents that include reference to the school's 21st century learning expectation.
- Ensure dependable funding to support appropriate staffing levels, maintenance of technology, and instructional supplies used to implement the curriculum

Instruction

- Ensure all students receive equal and frequent opportunities to practice and demonstrate the school's 21st century learning expectations
- Ensure that all students experience teaching strategies that require them to think deeply, solve real-world problems, and use inquiry processes to explore multiple perspectives on their learning
- Guarantee that teachers use results from formative and summative assessments to guide and personalize their selection of teaching methods
- Design professional learning activities that require teachers and administrators to regularly review and implement the findings of educational research
- Develop specific activities that consistently incorporate rigor and give all students multiple opportunities to use higher-order thinking skills, make cross-curricular connections, and demonstrate how their learning connects to the world beyond the classroom

Assessment of and for Student Learning

- Develop and implement a procedure for the measurement of individual and school-wide progress on 21st century learning expectations.
- Communicate, as appropriate, information on individual student and group progress toward achieving the targeted level of performance on the school-wide

rubrics to students, their families, and the school community at large

- Ensure that each student experiences a variety of assessment formats in each course
- Improve use of collaborative time to include the analysis and revision of formative and summative assessments connected with the school's 21st century expectations for student learning
- Clearly communicate relevant 21st century learning expectations to students prior to each unit of study
- Establish a process to review grading practices, ensuring consistency and connection to the school's 21st century expectations for student learning

School Culture and Leadership

3. Ensure that each student experiences a core subject course that is heterogeneously grouped
4. Increase involvement of parents and students involvement in decisions affecting student learning

School Resources for Learning

- Ensure a level of staffing in the library media center that facilitates teacher and student use
- Engage the library media specialist in instructional and curricular planning
- Improve access to non-English communications for parents/guardians
- Develop and implement a formal curriculum for the school counseling program
- Use the practice of collecting and reporting data in the health office as a model to be replicated by other support services

Community Resources for Learning

- Ensure that classroom supplies, equipment, and space are sufficient to support students' equitable opportunities to achieve the school's 21st century expectations for learning

- Ensure the renovation/reconstruction addresses all pertinent building code issues
- During and after the school's renovation, provide reliable funding to ensure the maintenance of the building, infrastructure, and instructional programming