New England Association of School and Colleges, Inc.

Commission on Public Schools

Committee on Public Secondary Schools

Report of the Visiting Team for Gateway Regional High School

Huntington, MA

October 28, 2018 - October 31, 2018

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

The prime concern of the visiting committee has been to assess the quality of the educational program at this school in terms of the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. Neither the total report nor any of its subsections is to be considered an evaluation of any individual staff member but rather a professional appraisal of the school as it appeared to the visiting committee.
The Committee on Public Secondary School's Standards for Accreditation serve as the foundation for the accreditation process and by which accreditation decisions are made. The seven Standards are qualitative, challenging, and reflect current research and best practice. The Standards, written and approved by the membership, establish the components of schools to ensure an effective and appropriate focus on teaching and learning and the support of teaching and learning.

Teaching and Learning Standards

Core Values and Beliefs About Learning

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of and for Student Learning

Support Standards

School Culture and Leadership

School Resources for Learning

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

1. The school community engages in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning.

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

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

4. The school regularly reviews and revises its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school community priorities.
Teaching and Learning Standard

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

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

2. The curriculum is written in a common format that includes:
   - units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills
   - the school’s 21st century learning expectations
   - instructional strategies
   - assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success, school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics.

3. The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through:
   - inquiry and problem-solving
   - higher order thinking
   - cross-disciplinary learning
   - authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school
   - informed and ethical use of technology.

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

5. Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices.
ASSESSMENT OF AND FOR STUDENT LEARNING

Teaching and Learning Standard

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

1. The professional staff continuously employs a formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school’s 21st century learning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics.

2. The school’s professional staff communicates:
   - individual student progress in achieving the school’s 21st century learning expectations to students and their families
   - the school’s progress in achieving the school’s 21st century learning expectations to the school community.

3. Professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.

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

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

6. In each unit of study, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.

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

8. Teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.

9. Teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.

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

11. Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school’s
core values and beliefs about learning.
Support Standard

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

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

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

3. There is a formal, on-going program(s) or process(es) through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school’s 21st century learning expectations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

11. The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school’s 21st century learning expectations.
12. The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school.
Support Standard

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7. Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
   - collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations
   - provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students
○ perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school’s 21st century learning expectations.
The achievement of the school’s 21st century learning expectations requires active community, governing board, and parent advocacy. Through dependable and adequate funding, the community provides the personnel, resources, and facilities to support the delivery of curriculum, instruction, programs, and services.

1. The community and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for:
   - a wide range of school programs and services
   - sufficient professional and support staff
   - ongoing professional development and curriculum revision
   - a full range of technology support
   - sufficient equipment
   - sufficient instructional materials and supplies.

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

3. The community funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses:
   - programs and services
   - enrollment changes and staffing needs
   - facility needs
   - technology
   - capital improvements.

4. Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget.

5. The school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services.

6. The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.

7. All professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student’s education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school.

8. The school develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning.
School and Community Summary

Gateway Regional High School

Set in the foothills of Western Massachusetts, in both Hampden and Hampshire Counties, the Gateway Regional High School is a small, regional, rural community of approximately 220 students in grades 9 through 12 within the towns of Blandford, Chester, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, and Russell. It is geographically 175 square miles, and is one of the five largest school districts in Massachusetts, housing a relatively low population of 7,979 people. Many of the district's roads are unpaved resulting in the winter closing of roads and bus routes.

The High School is located near a house that once contained a hiding place used by the Underground Railroad. The Gateway Regional School District was named to honor this place in its role as the Gateway to Freedom. The district insignia features an open gate leading to the lamp of knowledge.

Through a cooperative agreement established in the late 1950s, the high school opened in 1963 in the town of Huntington. Today, the district consists of two elementary schools, one regional middle school, and one regional high school. The FY19 budget for the district is $16.25 million dollars. The district received $568,991 in additional federal and state grant funding. The high school's portion of this budget is approximately 2,596,072. The average percentage of local taxation spent on schools is 25 percent, and it varies among towns.

The school district is the largest employer in the six towns. Local industry has diminished in the last 30 years. Most working parents must commute some distance to their place of employment. The district's towns are currently served by small business such as restaurants, local markets, and gift shops.

Although Western Massachusetts has enjoyed a fairly low rate of employment, the district contains several towns with pockets of poverty. Currently, the rate of free and reduced lunch is at 48 percent for the district (and the Chester elementary school is a universal meal site). The low-income rate identified in the high school is 28.6 percent. The average median family income in the area is 82,195, and the average per capita income is 34,299.83.

The community, while economically diverse, is racially, culturally, and ethnically homogeneous. During the 2017-2018 school year, 92.6 percent of the high school's students were white, 0.9 percent were Asian, 4.2 percent were Hispanic, 0.5 percent were African-American, and 1.9 percent identified as multi-race non-Hispanic. Presently less than 1 percent of the student body is enrolled in English Language Learner (ELL) classes. For the 2017-2018 school year, the number of students in grade 9 was 68, the number of students in grade 10 was 58, the number of students in grade 11 was 47, and the number of students in grade 12 was 39.

The Massachusetts state per-pupil expenditure during the 2016 fiscal year was $15,544.02 per pupil. The Gateway School District per pupil expenditure during the 2016 fiscal year was $17,380.60 per pupil. The Massachusetts state per-pupil expenditure during the 2015 fiscal year was $14,942.16. The Gateway School District per pupil expenditure during the 2015 fiscal year was $15,388.32 per pupil. Although there was limited funding available for grants in 2017-2018, the school district received $483,690 in federal grants, $36,100 in state grants and a Department of Health grant of 49,200, with a total of $568,990 for the district.

During the last two years, the average number of days a student was absent was 11.5 percent. The high school had a daily attendance rate of 93 percent and a 94-95 percent daily attendance rate for teachers. There were twelve internal suspensions and five external suspensions for 2017-2018. The two-year average dropout rate for the high school was 2 percent and the two-year graduation rate for the high school was 88.5 percent. The two-year attrition rate is 7.7 percent.
There is a total of 15.5 school choice students who came into the high school. There is a total of 36.5 school choice students who went out of the high school; the majority of these attend one of two local vocational schools. Though the student population is beginning to stabilize, there has been a downward fluctuation of about 15 percent in student enrollment in the high school over the last six years; subsequently, the student-teacher ratio has decreased.

Students in the high school participate in several standardized tests, including the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests. The average MCAS scores for the spring 2017 test for English Language Arts (ELA) were 36 percent advanced, 57 percent proficient, 6 percent needs improvement, and 1 percent warning/failing. The Math scores were 45 percent advanced, 36 percent proficient, 9 percent needs improvement, and 9 percent warning/failing. The Science scores were 28 percent advanced, 46 percent proficient, 24 percent needs improvement, and 2 percent warning/failing. The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) means scores were 580 in verbal and 555 in math. Advanced Placement (AP) Tests are also available through courses taught in the subject areas of US History, English Literature and Composition, English Language and Composition, Calculus, Chemistry, Physics I and Physics II. Students can also choose to take AP courses online and have taken these courses such as Music Theory and Psychology.

Per state and federal law, psychological and placement testing is conducted through the special education department. Other significant indicators of student performance beyond academic performance on standardized tests are the school-wide academic, social and civic expectations rubrics, the individual learning plans (ILPs) and authentic assessments. Graduation requirements beyond academic coursework include school service and internships.

The high school consists of seven fifty-minute academic periods, which includes a directed study period. Advisory meets once a week to support clubs, class meetings, student council and other matters that need to be discussed outside of the academic day. Courses are divided into four academic levels including AP, honors, college prep (CP), and college prep 2 (CP2). Approximately 65 percent of the student body is enrolled in at least one AP or honors courses. There are 3.5 special education teachers that provide services to 33 students in the high school.

Gateway Regional High School enjoys strong family and community support. Family and community members are active in a number of programs and groups that support the activities and academics in the high school including the Gateway Athletic Boosters, High School Band Boosters, High School Choir Boosters, the School Council, the Gateway Foundation, the towns' arts councils, the Red Cross club, the Drama club, and the Gateway Enterprise club. Parents and guardians are also encouraged to chaperone field trips and serve on the school council and on the school committee.

The community support is reflected in the numerous academic and achievement awards Gateway students receive. Academic awards vary from honor roll, National Honor Society (NHS), scholarships, to valedictorian and salutatorian awards to graduating seniors. Non-academic awards such as trophies, school letters, pins, and an all-star team serve as recognition for various co-curricular teams and organizations in the school. Other recognitions include citizenship awards, junior book awards from colleges, the principal's award, and the superintendent's award. The Golden Achievement Award is presented to a high school senior who demonstrates academic excellence, leadership, and community service.

Gateway Regional High School participates in the Mass College Application Celebration (through GEARUP) and is able to offer instant admissions through visits by admissions counselors from Springfield Technical Community College (STCC), Holyoke Community College (HCC), American International College (AIC) and Western New England University (WNEU) in addition to having a variety of colleges represented by admissions counselor visits every year. Gateway High School participates in dual enrollment for students at STCC, HCC and Westfield State University. The percentage of students from the Class of 2018 who are going on to four-year schools is 48.1 percent; the percentage of students who are going on to two-year schools is 15.4 percent; the percentage of students who are going on to technical schools is 3.8 percent; the percentage of students going into the workforce is 25 percent; and the percentage of students going into the military is 7.7 percent.
The district benefits from a number of partnerships with community organizations. Officers from the Massachusetts State Police, along with local police and fire departments participate in school safety drills and serve on the district's Safe and Drug-Free School Task Force and District Crisis Team. We were the first rural school district in Massachusetts to open a school-based health center (which currently includes a dental health center Gator Grins). The health center is operated by the Hilltown Community Health Centers at the high school/middle school complex. Additional counseling services are provided to the district by the Carson Center. Area businesses generously donate goods and services on a frequent basis. To facilitate coordination between the school-based health center and the school district, there is a Health Advisory Council that meets quarterly.

In return, the district strives to be a good partner in Hilltown community life. The high school/middle school is centrally located in the six towns, offering venues for athletic, musical, dramatic, and special events that are enjoyed by the community. Various organizations such as the Gateway Youth Athletic Association, the Gateway Little League, area churches, and civic groups have used the buildings and grounds for their activities, meetings, and classes.

The Gateway Regional School District has virtually no industrial tax base, which means local funding is based almost entirely on property taxes. Regional school transportation reimbursement has fluctuated over the years, resulting in a great financial strain in meeting all educational responsibilities, including federal and state mandates. Gateway faces challenges as a small school district, yet it is compelled to give our students the resources and education to become productive citizens in a global society.

Related Files

Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations

Gateway Regional High School
Core Values & Beliefs about Learning

Gateway Regional High School is an academic community that fosters growth, respect, honor, and spirit. We strive to provide a safe and caring learning environment where students are encouraged to share responsibility for their learning and academic achievement. Our curriculum provides students with the skills and knowledge needed to become productive citizens in a global society

G - Growing
R - Respect
H - Honor
S - Spirit

We believe -

- All students can learn
- Students learn in a variety of ways
- Learning requires consistent effort
- Learning requires a safe and supportive environment
- Learning is meaningful

Student Academic Expectations
Students at Gateway Regional High School will:

- Process and communicate information effectively
- Develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Develop an awareness of the arts, humanities, sciences, and technology

Student Social and Civic Expectations

Students at Gateway Regional High School will:

- Respect cultural, ethnic and religious diversity
- Demonstrate responsible behavior and healthy decision-making
- Develop collaborative interpersonal relationships and skills within the school community
- Actively engage as a citizen within the school community and beyond

Related Files
- [2018-04-17-10:39 _core-values.pdf]
Introduction

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

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

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

Teaching and Learning Standards

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations
Curriculum
Instruction
Assessment of and for Student Learning

Support of Teaching and Learning Standards

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

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

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Study

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Gateway Regional High School, a committee of four members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities, and facilities available for young people.

The self-study of Gateway Regional High School extended over a period of six school years from September 2012 to June 2018.
Public schools evaluated by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools must complete appropriate materials to assess their alignment with the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, and unique student population. In addition to using the Self-Study Guides developed by a representative group of New England educators and approved by the Committee, Gateway Regional High School also used questionnaires developed by The Research Center at Endicott College to reflect the concepts contained in the Standards for Accreditation. These materials provided discussion items for a comprehensive assessment of the school by the professional staff during the self-study.

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Team

A visiting team of 12 members was assigned by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Gateway Regional High School. The visiting team members spent four days in Huntington, Massachusetts, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students and parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school aligns with the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. Since the members of the visiting team represented classroom teachers, guidance counselors, library/media specialists, school administrators, and central office administrators, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Gateway Regional High School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 14 hours shadowing 11 students
- a total of 12 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 12 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers

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

This report of the findings of the visiting team will be forwarded to the Committee on Public Secondary Schools which will make a decision on the accreditation of Gateway Regional School.
Standard 1 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The Gateway Regional High School (GRHS) community engaged in a dynamic, collaborative, and somewhat inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning.

The current process began as early as the 2012-2013 school year with the examination of research-based best practices. Administrators and faculty members looked at practices such as the Essential Elements of the Formative Assessment Process, 21st Century Skills Crosswalk, and Webb's Depth of Knowledge Levels. In December 2014, the faculty met and began discussions to set the stage for developing core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. In the spring of 2015, the faculty used the NEASC guidebook on core values to examine the existing mission statement, academic, civic, and social expectations. Later that spring, the faculty examined resources on 21st century skills and exemplars from other schools. Further examination and discussion of best practices continued through 2015, leading to the creation of drafts for the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, as well as school-wide analytic rubrics for the learning expectations. On June 6, 2017, the faculty voted to approve the academic, civil, and social expectations, the school-wide rubrics, and exemplars. The core values express commitment to "G - growth, R - respect, H - honor, and S - spirit." That summer, the school updated the student handbook and program of studies with the new statement of beliefs and expectations. While some parents provided input into the process through discussions in school council meetings, the school gathered some student input only after the first year of implementation of the new core values and learning expectations.

When the school includes even more parent and student input into the process, GRSH will be better able to ensure that the entire school community can identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- students
- parents
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee
Conclusions

Gateway Regional High School has challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies. Each expectation is defined by specific and measurable criteria for success. GRHS has created school-wide analytic rubrics which define high levels of achievement.

A group of faculty members reviewed previous rubrics and updated them. At a staff meeting at the end of the 2017 school year, the faculty voted to approve the revised rubrics along with the academic, social, and civic expectations. The student handbook and the program of studies both contain the academic, social and civic expectations. The school began to present them to students through their individual student learning plans (ILPs) beginning with the freshman class in 2017. It intends to continue until all students participate in the ILP process. They are also posted prominently in classrooms throughout the high school.

Gateway Regional High School's academic expectations indicate that students will process and communicate information effectively, develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and develop an awareness of the arts, humanities, sciences, and technology. The social and civic expectations call for students to respect cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity, demonstrate responsible behavior, and healthy decision-making, develop collaborative interpersonal relationships, and skills within the school community, and actively engage as citizens within the school community, and beyond. There are rubrics for each expectation that indicate levels of success: approaching expectations, meets expectations, and exceeds expectations. The school also lists exemplars for each academic, social, and civic expectation.

Because GRHS has created challenging and measurable academic, social, and civic expectations and rubrics that define high levels of achievement, the school is able to ensure that all students have the opportunity to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teachers
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee
Conclusions

The school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are informally, 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.

The core values and learning expectations serve as an umbrella under which curriculum, instruction, assessment, and policies and procedures fit. The school offers academic college prep, honors, and AP courses that include mathematics, science, history, and English, Spanish, band, choir, art, welding, physical education, health, academic support, secondary reading, school to career opportunities (internships), dual enrollment with local colleges and universities, distance learning, and specialized services for students who need support. The welding program prepares students to enter a post-graduate training program for welding and metal fabrication by earning an entry-level certificate. The welding program is a certified Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) Chapter 74 program. Achievement of course and class-specific learning expectations in these areas informally provides students the opportunity to achieve the school's academic expectations for communicating effectively, developing critical thinking, and problem-solving, developing an awareness of the arts, humanities, sciences, and technology. GRHS offers an array of clubs and activities to further embed the academic, social, and civic expectations into the culture of the school. Students participate in the Best Buddies Program, Be Green, As Schools Match Wits, Model UN, Drama, Outdoor Club, Student Council, Gay/Straight Alliance, Red Cross, Perspectives Magazine, National Honor Society, and the Yearbook. Although a small school with approximately 220 students, GRHS offers soccer, basketball, cross-country, alpine skiing, baseball, wrestling, cheerleading, and softball. Participation in these programs provides students with informal opportunities to achieve the school's social and civic expectations of respect, responsibility, collaboration, and citizenship.

GRHS and the district have protocols in place that ensure that students experience the core value of a safe learning environment. A security person screens visitors to the building throughout the day. While the district has had difficulties in getting budgets passed by the six towns in the past few years, the superintendent and school committee are invested and engaged in providing a strategic plan to support the school's core values and beliefs. The core values make fundamental commitments to students: "All students can learn; Students learn in a variety of ways; Learning requires consistent effort; Learning requires a safe and supportive environment; Learning is meaningful." GRHS provided students in grade 9 with Chromebooks in the fall of 2017. This program continued in 2018 and by the fall of 2019 all students will have Chromebooks. Gateway pupil services offers a comprehensive array of special services to ensure that all students can learn. GRHS students have services for speech and language, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. In addition, there are licensed clinical social workers providing social-emotional and mental health supports. At the secondary level, there is full inclusion, partial inclusion, resource pull out across the curriculum, all of the related services professionals, a substantially separate self-contained behavioral program, Learning Lab, and Life Skills programs. The district employs two autism specialists, a teacher of the visually impaired, and a certified orientation and mobility specialist. The provision of technology and such services shows both a commitment to implementing the school's core values and how those beliefs drive decisions and resource allocations. Sixty-four percent of GRHS students go on to four- and two-year colleges. The rest attend technical schools, go into the workforce, or into the military. GRHS graduates are successful in a variety of occupations such as that of teachers, school administrators, forest rangers, business owners, doctors, combat medics, lawyers, and research scientists. Students realize that their education at GRHS is meaningful in order to pursue their post-high school goals.

Faculty members discuss and vote on issues that affect the culture of the school in monthly staff meetings; educational issues are also discussed and voted on at these meetings. As a whole staff and in departments, faculty members develop rubrics, curriculum, and assessments for 21st century learning. There are intervention programs in place for at-risk students. Faculty members report concerns about students to the student assistance team (SAT) team by email, in person, or by using a written SAT form. There are also intervention protocols through the nursing staff to ensure student safety. Students have two formal opportunities, advisory and directed study, during the school day to meet with faculty members in a small, non-academic setting. Faculty members
apply for grants to extend the variety of curricular and co-curricular offerings to students. The local arts councils, the Shipman Memorial Fund, and the Gateway Foundation are local organizations that provide funding for field trips such as the Bodies Exhibit in New York City and Broadway musicals. They provide materials for robotics and fuel cell lessons, special guest lecturers, master classes, and events. Students who study Spanish at Gateway have had the opportunity to travel to Costa Rica for a unique international learning experience that incorporates both science and world languages. The music and art departments hold field trips to provide authentic, professional arts experiences at museums and in theaters. The social studies department has held interactive video conferencing to allow all students access to authentic, historical information.

While the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are informally, 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, when they are more formally integrated, GRHS will be even better able to ensure that all students achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 1 Indicator 4

Conclusions

The school regularly reviewed and revised its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as on district and school community priorities to develop its current statement of core values and learning expectations.

The school began an examination of research-based best practices in the 2012-2013 academic year. Administrators and faculty members looked at practices such as the Essential Elements of the Backwards Design Unit Plan Template, Support for Implementing Essential Questions, and Standards to Consider in Unit Design. In December 2014, the faculty met and began discussions to set the stage for developing core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Later that spring, the faculty examined resources on 21st century skills and exemplars from other schools. Further examination and discussion of best practices continued through 2015 leading to June 6, 2017, when the faculty voted to approve the current academic, civic, and social expectations, the school-wide rubrics, and exemplars. In its list of critical strengths and needs in the self-study the school notes, "GRHS core values, beliefs about learning, academic, civic and social expectations need to be more formally incorporated into the classroom and school culture, with opportunities for student input." The school has identified "Updated Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations" in both its two-year and five-year targeted plans. In the two-year plan, the school targets the integration of its values, beliefs, and expectations with the program of positive behavior intervention and support (PBIS), incorporation into the teacher mentorship program, and integration into the individual learning plans (ILPs). The five-year targets include ILPs with student reflections based upon updated core values, beliefs, and learning expectations and the development of common language professional development to better incorporate the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations into daily practice.

Because the school regularly reviews and revises its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as on district and school community priorities, the school's guiding documents will continue to serve as explicit foundational commitments to students and the community.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teachers
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 1 Commendations

Commendation
The dynamic, collaborative, process informed by current research-based best practices to identify and commit to the school community's core values and beliefs about learning

Commendation
The school's challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies and the creation of school-wide analytic rubrics which define targeted high levels of achievement

Commendation
The school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations that are informally, 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

Commendation
The school's regular review and revision of its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school community priorities
Standard 1 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop and implement a program to ensure that the school community engages in a process that is more inclusive of parents and students to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning.

Recommendation

Develop and implement a program to ensure that the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are formally, 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.

Recommendation

Develop
Standard 2 Indicator 1

Conclusions

While the curriculum at Gateway Regional High School (GRHS) is purposefully designed for student achievement of class and course-specific expectations, incorporation of the school's recently created 21st century learning expectations is in the early stages.

Unit plans written for every course include clear essential questions and class and course-specific learning expectations. Course-specific rubrics assess these expectations throughout the curriculum. Teachers annually examine MCAS data to inform curricular changes. Teachers individually examine course-specific assessments and adjust curriculum informally on an ongoing basis. The school's 21st century learning expectations are clearly posted in the majority of classrooms; however, most students are unfamiliar with these expectations when asked about them. The school has created a detailed process for students to create an individualized learning plan (ILP) through goal-setting and portfolio building, based on the 21st century learning expectations and assessed by school-wide rubrics created for this purpose. The Class of 2021 will be the first to present ILP portfolios as part of an exit process. For example, a student might incorporate a lab into his or her portfolio and describe how it represents progress toward achieving the school-wide expectation for critical thinking.

While the curriculum is purposefully designed for student achievement of class and course-specific expectations, when full integration of the school's 21st century learning expectations occurs, GHS will be better able to ensure that students have opportunities to achieve them.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee
Conclusions

The school's curriculum is consistently written in a common format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, instructional strategies, and assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success such as course-specific rubrics, and, sometimes, the school's newly adopted 21st century learning expectations.

Written curriculum documents in the form of unit plans are constructed using the Understanding by Design (UBD) format. All disciplines include examples of such units. Science department unit plans contain unit descriptions with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills in detail. Other departments such as social studies have unit plans that include essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, but have yet to include 21st century learning expectations. The mathematics department's unit plans contain very detailed descriptions of the instructional strategies to be used with individual lessons. The English department unit plans include the assessment practices for each course including the use of specific and measurable criteria for success, most often in the form of class and course-specific rubrics. Students know the class and course-specific expectations because the GRHS curriculum is consistently written in a common format.

The school has a curriculum that is consistently written in a common format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, instructional strategies, and assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success such as course-specific rubrics. When all curriculum areas also integrate the school's 21st century learning expectations into the written curriculum, the school will be better able to ensure that all students achieve those expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee
Conclusions

The school’s curriculum generally emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem solving, higher order thinking, authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school, and informed and ethical use of technology; however, the curriculum has yet to formally emphasize cross-disciplinary learning.

The curriculum continually requires students to process information and to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and understanding of content. Content, instruction, and assessment in each area are designed to enable students to develop critical thinking skills. For example, in English classes, students are asked to respond to open-response questions and to analyze passages and scenes of importance selected from the assigned literature. In science classes, students are required to analyze data and to form hypotheses. Mathematics classes encourage students to shift from rote memorization to figuring out why things work. Results of the Endicott survey indicate that 80.8 percent of students agree that teachers challenge them to think critically and solve problems. An example of the curriculum’s requiring higher-order thinking is the I Search project in English classes. Students provide meta-cognitive explanations of the development of their topics during the course of their research. Teachers and students indicate that cross-disciplinary learning occurs on an informal basis.

GRHS provides students the opportunity for on-the-job training and the chance to earn high school credit through the School to Career Program, which is an internship program. Seniors seeking an onsite job experience related to career aspirations participate in internships. Dual enrollment provides an opportunity for seniors to enroll in local colleges and universities to receive credit on both the high school and college level. The welding program provides direct career to work pathways. Some students serve as teaching assistants within the school district and work at local businesses. Students have many opportunities to participate in authentic learning. Teachers use project-based learning to engage students in real-life simulations. For example, in Forensics, students conduct a simulated crime-scene investigation. In English classes, students write persuasive essays, personal essays, and research essays. In business mathematics classes, students apply their skills to real-life situations by determining taxable income, federal taxes, state taxes, and net pay after being given a specific weekly salary. In Algebra 3 and Precalculus, students work out the math behind calculating a simple mortgage payment and then use that to figure out how much loans would cost. In Calculus, students work on problems such as determining why a sheet of paper 8.5" by 11" maximizes the printable area of a page. In a social studies class, students are able to meet virtually with two Holocaust survivors. According to the Endicott survey, 89 percent of students agree that they are knowledgeable about the ethical uses of technology. GRHS assigns a Chromebook to all freshmen and sophomores for the school year. Prior to receiving the Chromebook, each student and his or her parent must read and sign a Student Use of Electronic Communication Devices (ECDs) Guidelines and Permission Slip which outlines acceptable uses for ECDs and possible disciplinary actions for infractions. In addition, all students are given a Network Responsibility Contract which their parents and they (if the student is under eighteen) must read and sign.

Some classes provide informal opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning. Social studies and English classes sometimes combine historical, background information and activities on the time period in which some literature is taking place. Students in social studies classes write expository and persuasive essays. Students in world language classes discuss current events topics such as the border wall and the relationship between the United States and Latin America. In addition, students in Spanish class create their own literary magazine using computers. Science and mathematics classes sometimes make connections about graphs and functions, relating the shape of a graph to its equation.

While the school’s curriculum generally emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem solving, higher order thinking, authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school, and informed and ethical use of technology, when the school provides students more formal cross-disciplinary learning opportunities, it will be better able to ensure that all students achieve the school’s 21st century learning expectations.
Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 2 Indicator 4

Conclusions

There is generally clear, but informal, alignment between the written and taught curriculum.

Teachers individually and informally have spent much time during the last several years creating and updating the written curriculum. The units of study are aligned with state standards as assessed by the MCAS examination, and the school points to MCAS scores as an indication that the taught curriculum closely follows the written curriculum. For 2018, 95.5 percent of students passed the English language arts examination, 88 percent of students passed the mathematics examination, and 88.8 percent of students passed the science examination. According to the Endicott survey, 77.4 percent of teachers agree that the written and taught curriculum are aligned. While there is time set aside for departmental meetings during the monthly extended principal late days for teachers to individually review curriculum, the loss of positions of department heads and the curriculum director make it difficult for the school to have a formal process to align the written and taught curriculum.

While teachers informally align the written and taught curriculum, when the school more formally develops and revises curriculum to establish formal alignment between the written and taught curriculum, it will be better able to ensure that all student achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 2 Indicator 5

Conclusions

The school has informal curricular coordination and vertical articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools.

Over the last several years, teachers in every department have individually been writing plans for each unit taught in each course at the high school. This process involved developing essential questions for each unit, outlining the instructional strategies and content included, and identifying possible assessments. All teachers aligned their courses with the Common Core Standards and ensured that all standards were being addressed. The school is also currently undergoing a literacy audit which is a study to identify strengths and challenges within the district in order to address any areas of weakness. The position of department heads has been lost due to budget cuts. The school has yet to develop a formal process for coordination or vertical articulation. Two teachers rarely teach the same course at the same time, so much of the coordination that is done depends on informal communication between newer and more veteran teachers. Some ninth and tenth grade English and social studies teachers collaborate to ensure that content and writing strategies are reinforced across these two subjects. Similarly, teachers in the mathematics and science departments sometimes collaborate when teaching skills such as trigonometry and solving equations.

There are rarely formal opportunities for faculty members to communicate with teachers at sending schools in the district to coordinate curriculum and vertical articulation of curriculum within the district. The elementary school teachers follow a different schedule from middle and high school teachers. Occasionally, middle school and high school teachers meet together for professional development, but they are rarely afforded opportunities to talk about curriculum. Informally, such communication occurs within departments, when, for example, middle and high school mathematics teachers discuss the importance of various topics.

While teachers informally make efforts to coordinate curriculum, when the school develops a formal program to provide effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district, it will be better able to ensure that all students achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 2 Indicator 6

Conclusions

Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are generally sufficient to fully implement the curriculum.

Staffing levels at GRHS are generally adequate to effectively implement the curriculum across all departments. Thirty academic teachers, including nine teachers who are shared with the middle school, populate eight main departments. Class size throughout the school is generally small. School-wide class size ranges from 1 to 26 students. In core academic classes, class size ranges from 3 to 21 students.

According to the Endicott survey, only 36 percent of teachers report that they have sufficient time for curriculum work. The number of unique curricula that each teacher is responsible for delivering during any given semester range from 1 to 4 courses per teacher. Teachers who have only one or two courses to prepare feel able to do so adequately; however, teachers who have three or four courses to prepare find that their ability to effectively deliver the curriculum is somewhat negatively impacted as a result of their course loads. According to the GRHS website, there are no fewer than sixty-two unique course offerings, many with multiple sections. As a result, teachers must teach multiple courses to provide this level of choice to the student body.

The school routinely grants teachers' requests for instructional materials, equipment, and supplies. The technology team continuously updates its capabilities. Currently, grades 9, 10, and 11 students have their own Chromebooks. By the 2019-2020 school year, GRHS plans to provide all students with their own Chromebooks. Additionally, there are several MacBook carts located throughout the school for current grade 11 and 12 students to use. According to the Endicott survey, the majority of teachers and parents agree that facilities support the implementation of curriculum. Each academic classroom is equipped with an overhead projector, surround sound speakers, a VHS/DVD player, and full Wi-Fi coverage. In addition, a majority of the classrooms are equipped with Smartboard technology. The science labs, the academic classrooms, the library/media center, the performing arts center, the graphic arts lab, the video production lab, the welding room, and the wood shop all support delivery of the curriculum. Each science classroom is equipped with lab tables, complete with power, gas valves, and sinks. Academic classrooms are sufficiently large enough to accommodate large and small group learning, and there are a sufficient number of classrooms to support the curriculum.

The library/media center has ample resources to support the school's curriculum. According to the Endicott survey, 79 percent of students agree that the library/media center has the resources that they need, and 90 percent of teachers agree that the library/media center provides a wide range of print and non-print materials, including technologies and other information services, that fully support the curriculum. The library/media center features a distance learning center, which allows for full classrooms to participate in video-conferencing sessions and interactive field trips.

The performing arts center is a 650-seat auditorium, equipped with microphones, high-quality speakers, multi-colored lights, an overhead projection system, and a well-equipped tech booth. The center is often used to deliver the curriculum. The school's tech crew often works closely with other areas of the curriculum, such as the band and choir, and co-curricular programs such as theater. The choir and band programs collaborate frequently to put on school and community performances, such as spring and winter concerts, as well as an annual cabaret that is open to members of the community. The center is also home to special student assemblies such as the annual college fair that is put on by the GRHS counselors. The video production lab is also used to help implement the GRHS curriculum, having a variety of cameras, computers, and video editing software that allow students to create and edit various video projects. The welding room houses a number of welders and welding-related equipment, allowing for the implementation of a Chapter 74 vocational education welding program that prepares students for a career in metal fabrication and welding, comprising many courses. Students graduate with the opportunity to earn state certification and thus become eligible for jobs related to welding and metal fabrication. The wellness center is a well-equipped workout space that contains treadmills, cables, free weights, mats, elliptical machines, and stationary bikes. The gymnasium contains a full-sized basketball court and stands
that are large enough to accommodate the entire student body. Special assemblies, such as the inter-grade competition Reindeer Games, are hosted in the gymnasium.

While staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are generally sufficient to implement the curriculum, when GRHS addresses the high course loads assigned to some teachers and provides sufficient support for co-curricular activities, the school will be even better able to fully implement the curriculum.

**Sources of Evidence**

- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 2 Indicator 7

Conclusions

Gateway Regional High School (GRHS) is limited in providing the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research.

Despite small class sizes, there is a sentiment among some teachers that teaching loads are too high and impact the delivery of some curriculum. According to the Endicott survey, only 36 percent of teachers report that they have sufficient time for curriculum work. Course loads assigned to teachers range from 1 to 5 courses. Some teachers are scheduled to teach middle school courses in addition to their high school load. Gateway Regional High School has not had a curriculum coordinator since a 2016 retirement. Budget constraints forced the elimination of the positions of department chair and two teacher leader positions creating a leadership gap in formal curricular development and coordination.

Teachers report that there has been little formal time available for collaboration on curriculum either within departments or for cross-discipline planning. Formal time for MCAS analysis is limited. The principal has scheduled some more time for curriculum development through the extended principal late day. Financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development are limited. Evaluation and revision of the curriculum using assessment results other than MCAS and current research happens informally and on an individual basis. Formal professional development focused on developing and implementing curriculum design based on assessment results and current research is lacking. Teachers have individually sought out and attended professional development at their own expense and time.

When the district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources, the school will be better able to conduct ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 2 Commendations

Commendation
The purposeful design of the written curriculum for all classes that ensures students practice and achieve class and course-specific learning expectations

Commendation
The many elements of the curriculum that are written in a common format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, instructional strategies, and assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success, such as course-specific rubrics

Commendation
The curriculum that emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem-solving, higher order thinking, authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school, and informed and ethical use of technology

Commendation
The informal clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum

Commendation
The informal efforts of teachers to provide curricular coordination and vertical articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district

Commendation
The staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center that are generally sufficient to implement the curriculum

Commendation
The informal efforts of teachers and staff to conduct ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research
Standard 2 Recommendations

Recommendation

Fully implement the individual learning plan (ILP) process to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to ensure that all of the curriculum is written in a common format that includes the school's 21st century learning expectations in addition to units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills, instructional strategies, and assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic or course-specific rubrics.

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to ensure that the curriculum provides more formal opportunities for students to participate in cross-disciplinary learning.

Recommendation

Develop and implement a formal plan to ensure that there is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum.

Recommendation

Develop and implement a formal plan to ensure effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to ensure that 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.

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to ensure that 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.
Recommendation

Develop and
Standard 3 Indicator 1

Conclusions

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

All teachers are familiar with the school's identified beliefs about learning. These standards for student learning and growth are frequently discussed in faculty meetings, on display in the guidance department, written into the program of studies, and posted on the school's website. Parents, students, and community members have routine access to the core values and beliefs. Each school year, the administrators assess the faculty on the implementation of student learning goals as well as on professional practice goals. Baseline Edge is the assessment tool for professional staff. Many teachers use the student learning goals as an opportunity informally to track progress on 21st century skills and implementation of the curriculum. An administrator supervises and evaluates faculty members throughout the year, providing feedback about instruction and outcomes in individual classrooms. There is also an open line of communication between the school and the community regarding how these expectations should be met, with exemplars and criteria for proficiency displayed.

The core beliefs are posted throughout the school and when asked to discuss them, students are able to either verbalize the standards or talk about what it means to them in terms of their school life. Students state that these values are mirrored in their pride in the cleanliness of the building, the respect they have for each other and the adults in the building, and in activities such as the service learning trips that they take to Costa Rica with the Spanish teacher. Many teachers at GRHS have made a commitment to 21st century skills by participating in a technology initiative, increasing the number of interactions students have with different online tools while remaining sensitive to the difficulties involving at-home internet access. Gateway Regional School District has provided each student in grades 6-10 with a Chromebook, and additional computers are available for upper-class student usage. These computers may be used at school for instructional purposes, as well as at home, to increase student integration of 21st century skills such as using technology to transform learning. Students are able to communicate with peers and faculty electronically using G Suite.

Some teachers engage in teaching practices that informally support the school's core values and beliefs about learning. Spanish, mathematics, and art teachers informally reflect upon and analyze their instructional practices. English and social studies teachers sometimes collaborate on using a writing rubric. Some teachers are using direct instruction while others engage in more personalized instruction.

While teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined informally to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, when the school employs a more formal process it will be better able to ensure more consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- school leadership
• Standard sub-committee
Standard 3 Indicator 2

Conclusions

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

Most teachers personalize instruction by including differentiated strategies such as choice of topics based on interest and use of learning inventories. The welding and woodshop teachers allow students to choose projects based on their interests, including making jewelry, restoring school property, and helping in the community. For example, by restoring a historic community property. The art teacher has an adapted art class for students with cognitive challenges and personalizes instruction based on interest and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Many teachers personalize instruction by regularly meeting with individuals or small groups of students to address individual learning needs during the advisory class. Students also can access online learning through Edgenuity or Connexus to personalize their learning by taking courses of interest. Teachers also emphasize social-emotional learning to guide each student toward accessing 21st century curriculum.

In many areas, teachers engage students as active and self-directed learners. Students in biology work at their own pace on a biome unit. Students in welding and woodworking classes develop and carry out projects independently. Teachers in the music and life skills classes act as coaches to facilitate student learning with project-based learning.

Many teachers ask students to apply knowledge and skills to authentic tasks. Students in the life skills class are using cooking and consumer mathematics skills to make and sell chocolate covered pretzels. Students contribute original writing pieces to a student-generated magazine. Students in welding and woodworking classes make chairs and jewelry to present or sell to the school and community. Students in music classes record their performances on Garage Band and receive teacher and peer evaluation and feedback. The jazz band performs for the community at school while raising funds for their class on Cabaret Night. Students in the consumer mathematics class complete a project simulating the purchase of a new car. Many students participate in internships through the guidance department as an independent study.

Some teachers engage students in self-assessment and reflection. The guidance department works with all grade 9 students in Freshman Seminar to assess Holland Codes which are derived from an electronic interest inventory. The results of these assessments are shared with students and teachers and give insight into the best instructional practices for individuals as well as areas of strength and possible career paths. Some teachers use these codes to adapt their instruction. Many mathematics and science classes allow students to correct tests and quizzes to earn partial credit on things they initially got wrong. Some teachers have students self-assess and reflect on their work.

Most teachers integrate technology to enhance instruction in the classroom. Chromebook use is 1:1, and technology is available in the library/media center in the form of MakerSpace and Edgenuity online learning. Over the last few years, the school has participated in a technology initiative, increasing the amount of interaction students have with the different online tools while remaining sensitive to the difficulties involving at-home internet access. Gateway Regional School District has provided each student in grades 6-10 with a Chromebook, with additional Chromebooks available for upperclassmen.

Some teachers engage in cross-disciplinary learning such as welding, math, and science using engineering themes to complete real-world projects. Few teachers are engaging in cross-disciplinary learning with regard to school-wide instruction planned around a given theme. It is common for the teachers to touch briefly on topics outside of their content area, but these connections are not in-depth or formal. Teachers lack of common planning time and general time constraints limit their ability to engage in cross-disciplinary learning.
In some areas, teachers emphasize inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking. For example, a Spanish teacher plans a service learning trip to Costa Rica to have students work with endangered species. Students set personal goals in directed study and work independently throughout the semester to achieve their goals. Lectures and other teacher-led instructional methods are also used. Students in social studies classes have the opportunity to think big when comparing local trends and developments with national trends. Mathematics teachers frequently focus on getting students to shift from rote memorization to figuring out why things work.

While many teachers are able to engage in instructional practices that support the achievement of the school’s 21st century learning expectations by personalizing instruction, engaging students as active and self-directed learners, applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, engaging students in self-assessment and reflection, and integrating technology, when all teachers engage students more formally in cross-disciplinary learning as well as emphasize inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking, all students will be better able to achieve the school’s 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 3 Indicator 3

Conclusions

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

Much formative assessment occurs at GRHS. Some teachers use pre-tests as a formative assessment. Teachers and aides work with individual students and provide feedback, guidance, and adjustment to instruction as necessary. Teachers frequently employ organized group activities. In mathematics classrooms, teachers provide many examples of problems and continually check for understanding before moving on. In art, the teacher continually has informal discussions with students and helps each one individually to help determine the next steps in a project. In English classes, students share their rough drafts and in-progress writing with teachers and receive feedback via Google Docs. World languages teachers routinely reiterate proper pronunciation. Digital art classes start with a pre-assessment to determine what students already know to guide future instruction.

Teachers at GRHS frequently adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of individual students through strategic differentiation. According to the Endicott survey, 71.9 percent of students agree that teachers use a variety of strategies in the classroom. Paraprofessional assistance to individuals and groups within classrooms allows teachers to implement student differentiation and one-on-one instruction. Paraprofessionals recently completed professional development that focused on differentiation and incorporating accommodations and modifications which are part of students' IEPs. Teachers consistently provide multi-modal instruction to include group work, direct instruction, students working at the board, pair-share lab work, and one-on-one instruction.

Teachers often adjust instructional practice to include purposeful organization of group learning activities. According to the Endicott survey, 80.8 percent of students agree that teachers use group activities. Teachers in the language department assign students to competing teams for review activities. Other teachers also use heterogeneous groupings in a similar way to help review and revisit difficult topics. Students work together and teach one another. The English department uses a carousel discussion which groups students and allows them to discuss, share, and analyze fellow student work. Both the social studies and English departments use instructional strategies such as peer editing to revise student writing. The science department also groups students for laboratory work. When working with lab partners, some of the work is done independently, and some is done as a group. Teachers adjust groups and group activities to meet the individual needs of students.

The vast majority of teachers adjust their instructional practice to meet the needs of students by providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom. GRHS frequently employs one-on-one instruction and small group learning. Paraprofessionals are assigned to specific students in accordance with IEPs, and sometimes students are pulled out of class for test taking or academic support. Some teachers provide notes for lectures online. Students access these notes before the lesson or after the lesson if they need clarification. Teachers are available during advisory, after school, and sometimes during directed study for students who need some extra help. Teachers provide study guides, access to notes, Chromebooks, games, video clips, and movies that reinforce content in multimodal ways. The use of manipulative skills and/or models and graphic organizers gives students multiple ways to access and process information.

Because teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by using formative assessments during instructional time, strategically differentiating, purposely organizing group learning activities, and providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom, all students have an opportunity to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee
Conclusions

Teachers, individually and collaboratively, informally 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; however, teachers have infrequent formal opportunities to examine current research or engage in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.

Many teachers use student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments. Formal meeting time is limited to principal late day meeting times, but many teachers review data informally with department members on their own before and after school. According to the Endicott survey, 77.4 percent of teachers report that they improve instructional practices by using student achievement data. Teachers examine individual teacher assessments as well as standardized tests such as the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), student self-reflections, and several types of formative and summative assessments. Teachers look at student work, but according to the Endicott survey, only 48.4 percent of teachers report that they have formal opportunities to examine student work to improve their instructional practices, and 32 percent report examining work informally. Teachers in the social studies department use formative assessment data from NEWSELA articles and electronic quizzes and summative data from document-based questions (DBQs) from primary sources to inform their instruction. Student self-reflection after completing a presidential research project helped a teacher adjust instruction and project expectations for the following year. A special education teacher uses a shared Google form with general education teachers and paraprofessionals to track student assignments to adjust and individualize instruction.

Many teachers use feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents. According to the Endicott survey, at least half of students report that teachers ask for feedback from them and then make adjustments to their instruction as a result of student feedback. Many teachers meet informally to share feedback before and after school. All teachers regularly receive feedback from supervisors who use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning. In order to maintain an effective faculty who successfully foster student learning and growth, teachers are evaluated each year in a process through the Baseline Edge program. Each teacher meets with supervisors several times throughout the course of the academic school year. Teachers use feedback to improve instruction and create goals for the coming year.

Teachers individually examine current research. According to the Endicott survey, 58 percent of teachers report that they engage in formal opportunities for professional discourse focused on instructional practices. Professional discourse includes attending conferences and workshops on inclusion and special education, providing educational access and equity, and numerous other current professional development topics offered locally and through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Only 44 percent of teachers report that they often use current research to improve their instructional strategies; 50 percent report using current research sometimes; and 6 percent report that they rarely use current research to improve their instructional strategies. A literacy initiative committee researched Project Read based upon district-wide data. The board-certified behavior analyst (BCBA) has helped update the life skills program using current research and best practice. Students have increased participation in general education classes and are spending more time in the community for work and recreation. Some teachers are engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.

While a majority of teachers informally, 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, when all teachers have more formal opportunities to examine current research or engage in professional discourse focused on instructional practices, then all students will have even greater access to instructional practices based upon specific student data information.
Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee
Conclusions

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

Each year, there at least 19 faculty meetings during which teachers may receive professional development points for their attendance and participation in workshops determined by the district. The district provides one full day for professional development at the beginning of the school year, two half days, and four early release days. The district has offered teachers professional development on the subjects of literacy and social-emotional learning. Teachers find that there is a need for more content-based professional development. Although money is typically set aside for professional development opportunities for teachers outside of school, this amount fluctuates based on the district's budget, and this account is sometimes borrowed from or frozen due to factors outside of teachers' control. Teachers are often left to spend personal money on seminars and higher education. Teachers are able to reflect on their practices during the teacher evaluation cycle. This evaluation plan has teachers on one- and two-year cycles. Teachers can reflect upon administrative feedback received after observations. Teachers can also reflect on personal progress on various goals. Both pre-observation and post-observation guides contain a series of questions for teachers for response and reflection. A majority of teachers hold a master's degree or higher in education, while 22 percent of teachers hold dual certifications.

Because teachers maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices, students have access to teachers engaging in best practices around instruction.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 3 Commendations

Commendation
The informal examination of teachers' instructional practices to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations

Commendation
The teachers' engagement in instructional practices that supports the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by personalizing instruction, engaging students as active and self-directed learners, applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, engaging students in self-assessment and reflection, and integrating technology

Commendation
The teachers' adjustment of instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by using formative assessment, especially during instructional time, strategically differentiating, purposefully organizing group learning activities, and providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom

Commendation
The informal improvement of instructional practices by teachers who use student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments, examine student work, and use feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents

Commendation
The teachers, who as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices
Standard 3 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop and implement a formal plan to ensure that teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to ensure that all teachers engage students more formally in cross-disciplinary learning, as well as emphasize inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking.

Recommendation

Develop and implement a formal program to ensure that teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by examining current research, and engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.
Standard 4 Indicator 1

Conclusions

Gateway Regional High School has yet to fully implement a formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics.

The school includes its 21st century learning expectations in the GRHS 2018-2019 Program of Studies; however, the school has yet to develop a formal way for teachers to measure student progress in achieving each of the school's expectations. Similarly, there has yet to be a fully developed process by which the school can measure whole-school progress in achieving each of the school's expectations. The school has begun implementation of individual learning plans (ILPs), student-driven plans created to address learning and 21st century expectations. The process is in year two of a four-year implementation schedule. By year four, the administrators plan to have graduating seniors demonstrate how their chosen portfolio pieces reflect mastery of the school's 21st century learning expectations. For example, a successful lab assignment or history paper might indicate both critical thinking and problem-solving, based on the teacher's rubric and the student's reflection. However, some of the teachers and students are unaware of the newly developed long-term goals for the ILP program.

When the professional staff continuously employs a formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics, individual and collective student progress in achieving the school's learning expectations can be accurately assessed.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- student work
- teachers
- students
- school board
- department leaders
- school leadership
- school website
- Standard sub-committee
Conclusions

The professional staff has yet to communicate individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families as well as the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community.

There is not a formal alignment between department and course-specific rubrics and school-wide rubrics for assessing the school's 21st century learning expectations; consequently, the school's Rediker student/parent portal, while a vital communication tool for reporting progress on department-specific expectations, is insufficient as a means of communicating individual student and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. If a course-specific rubric for an assignment aligns with a newly created 21st century learning expectation, that alignment to this point is informal more than intentional. Administrators and teachers agree that 21st century skills are informally embedded in the curriculum, but not yet explicit. Students, for example, learn 21st century learning skills in problem-solving in social studies class, English, AP Chemistry or Biology, mathematics, and some other areas throughout the curriculum.

Once the GRHS professional staff formally communicates individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations as well as school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families and the school community, the school will be better able to successfully inform all stakeholders of student progress and school growth.

Sources of Evidence

- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school leadership
- school website
- Standard sub-committee
Conclusions

The professional staff has an informal process by which it collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.

According to the Endicott survey, only 29 percent of teachers agree that they collect, analyze, and respond to inequities in student achievement. Teachers individually provide modifications to meet the needs of students, but such efforts are informal. Students agree that teachers are ready to step forward when they see a student struggle. Administrators agree that they would like to spend more formal time looking at data in an intentional way specifically for the purpose of tiered intervention. Based upon the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) results, an achievement gap that the school must address concerns the special education population. Another achievement gap involves those students who receive free and reduced lunch.

There is an ongoing issue concerning when and how formal conversations about inequities in achievement might take place. The district has implemented a principal late day format for vertical and horizontal meetings. Other than that time, there is no formalized process by which teaching staff sit and review data for the specific purpose of responding to inequities. Staff reviews MCAS data when it is released; however, teachers find that classroom assessment drives curriculum change. For example, a calculus teacher noticed that her students needed greater problem-solving skills in order to succeed with the content of the course. In response to this, she reworked the pre-calculus course to include more challenging word problems in order to develop that skill.

Once the professional staff at GRHS has a more formal process to collect, disaggregate, and analyze data, they will be better able to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee
Conclusions

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

Students are provided with course syllabi, unit outlines, and project outlines which clarify the class and course-specific learning goals to be assessed. Teachers recognize 21st century learning expectations such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration as key components of the daily work that they assign, but few explicitly make clear connections for students that they are working on those skills. For example, in a digital design project, technology use is an embedded aspect of the assessment, but there is no explicit communication by the teacher that the student is working on one of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Nevertheless, there are some exceptions. Social studies offers a historical writing rubric that assesses students on their thesis statement and analysis and use of evidence. There is a clear link to critical thinking. Students in STEM work through a design process that clearly has problem-solving. The rubric handed to students ahead of time reflects the problem-solving in which they are expected to engage. The video production class also links student work to the 21st century skills involving the use of technology to communicate and collaborate. Teachers assess students on specific aspects of their collaborative group work. Students and teachers are confident that students understand what is expected of them when an assignment is given.

Once teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations to be assessed prior to each unit of study, students will have a better understanding of what expectations they are meeting.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 4 Indicator 5

Conclusions

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

According to the Endicott survey, 81 percent of students agree that they understand in advance what work they need to accomplish to meet the teacher's expectations, and 73 percent agree that their teachers use clear criteria such as rubrics to assess their work. In some instances, such as in world languages and art, teachers use department-wide criteria for success. An American Romantic Literature Essay rubric has a clear grading scale with descriptions for each level of the grading scale. A rubric in social studies contains exemplars in the left column of a rubric and a numerical grading system.

Because teachers provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success, such as corresponding rubrics, they can ensure that students understand defined high levels of achievement prior to summative assessments.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee
Conclusions

In each unit of study, teachers consistently employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.

Most teachers use formative assessment regularly. Teachers use activators, or starting activities, quick writing prompts, pretests, and guided homework review. Teachers also consistently assess learning on a day-to-day basis through observation. Teachers regularly circle the classroom as students work to anticipate any issues and to address students in an active manner. Teachers work with students one-on-one to check for understanding. Teachers break down document-based questions into manageable parts to make sure students understand what is being asked. Teachers consider what is in the best interest of students on a case-by-case basis and strive to address the needs of the whole child.

Teachers also use a range of assessment strategies in addition to summative assessments in order to keep content interesting for students. In a business mathematics class, teachers expect students to complete a formative activator, to review the homework as a class, to receive new material, and to briefly discuss the homework assignment. In an anatomy class, teachers ask students to determine how shards of aluminum piercing a pickle demonstrate the damage done by bullets to the human body and help them to identify parts of the human body with the pickle as a model.

Because in each unit of study teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments, students are able to achieve the school's learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee
Conclusions

While teachers collaborate regularly in informal ways, they have yet to collaborate regularly in formal ways on creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments.

The school occasionally provides department-wide professional development opportunities, but most often informal collaboration occurs. Teachers regularly meet with special education staff and ELL support staff to collaborate on alternative and modified assignments for students who require such supports. Since most teachers teach the only section of a course or all sections of the same course, there is not much collaboration on common assessments in the classrooms. According to the Endicott survey, only 35.5 percent of teachers agree that they meet formally to discuss and improve both formative and summative assessment strategies. Designated formal time to collaborate is infrequent. The school intends to horizontally and vertically collaborate on department and school-wide analysis of assessment, and this is part of its two-year targeted plan. Late days to afford set aside time after school once every other week, would be devoted to formal collaboration. This collaboration would include a study of which students are struggling and where they are struggling.

When Gateway Regional High School teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments, they will be better able to meet student needs.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 4 Indicator 8

Conclusions

The majority of teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.

According to the Endicott survey, 78.1 percent of students agree that their teachers offer suggestions to help them improve their school work. Teachers give or write out compliments, and if students do not understand and require corrective feedback, teachers will set up individual meetings to provide extra help. Special education teachers routinely provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to students, especially concerning student life skills and behaviors. Teachers provide feedback for formative assignments as well as for tests and essays, in a timely manner. Most teachers go above and beyond normal expectations to ensure that students receive timely feedback, especially if they request additional guidance or help. Some teachers provide opportunities for students to revise or resubmit work. Some teachers correct tests and then require students to explain what they need to do to make corrections. In numerous student work examples, teachers provided detailed comments in addition to ratings on assignment rubrics.

Since most teachers are providing specific, timely, and corrective feedback, students are able to improve their work and achieve the school's learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee
Conclusions

The majority of teachers frequently use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.

Departments such as art and biology use exit tickets to assess student learning at the end of class to better plan for the next day. During jazz band, the teacher asks students to play measures either alone or in sections to make sure that all players are hitting their notes with appropriate pitch and phrasing before the class plays as a whole. A mathematics teacher assesses students during group work to ensure that they solve problems together. In calculus, students learn to rely on each other to help improve learning. There are numerous ways that teachers work with both individuals or the whole class to clarify understanding. In English, teachers provide students formative assessment during the writing process. In mathematics, teachers review the results of the previous night’s homework before moving on to new content. Teachers also have students begin new homework in class to make sure that they will not have problems when taking it home. In social studies, teachers check binders to make sure that students record information accurately in order to determine what needs to be taught for later.

Because teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction, they are better able to improve student learning.

Sources of Evidence

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

Teachers and administrators individually, but to a lesser extent collaboratively, informally 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 expectations, standardized assessments, data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions, and survey data from students and alumni.

The school recently instituted a principal’s late day on every second and third Tuesday of the month, providing limited, but formal opportunities for teachers and administrators to begin to collaboratively examine student work for student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice. Many teachers teach singleton courses due to the small size of the school. Teachers meet informally about the needs of individual students or about the direction of a given class. There have been some efforts toward collaboration. The social studies department met with professors from Westfield State University to develop and calibrate rubrics. The performing arts department worked on its district-defined measurements in conjunction with other local school systems. Because of the small size of the school, teachers do not often share a course section with another teacher and therefore do not have common course and common grade-level assessments. This situation leads to frequent individual examination but very infrequent collaborative examination of a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice. For example, one teacher had provided open choice for expository essays one year, but, based on how many students struggled with the open choice, adjusted her curriculum to provide topic suggestions the following year when giving the same assessment. Overall, teachers individually and informally make such adjustments.

The school has yet to formally align department and course-specific rubrics with the school-wide rubrics to allow examination of individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school’s 21st century expectations. Instead, the 21st century expectations are informally embedded in the curriculum rather than explicitly integrated. While the pre-calculus class, for example, incorporates more opportunities for problem-solving in order to prepare students for the rigors of calculus, based upon student data, the modification has yet to be formally connected to the school-wide expectation for problem-solving. The school has begun to implement individual learning plans in grades 9 and 10.

The administrators and teachers review the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) scores. Teachers disseminate MCAS data individually, but infrequently collaboratively. For example, the social studies and English teachers meet collaboratively once per year to discuss the written portion of the MCAS, especially the nonfiction section. Mathematics teachers also look at MCAS data to create strategies to address perceived weaknesses. The professional staff has yet to use PSAT and SAT data individually or collaboratively.

Teachers informally meet with representatives from the key sending school which is Gateway Regional Middle School (GRMS). For example, an English teacher from GRHS said that, on an informal basis, she would meet with a GRMS teacher who previously taught her students in order to examine and discuss student learning. Outside of informal collaboration, there are some opportunities for vertical collaboration during principal late days and faculty meetings. However, teachers find that they need more formal opportunities to examine data. There is a calendar plan titled 18-19 Collaboration Calendar for future vertical alignment meetings, but it is in the initial stages of implementation and practice.

Survey data from students and alumni have been examined. In May, all seniors participate in a senior exit survey given by the high school counseling department. This survey asks students to evaluate the school counseling program and to give feedback on the programs, resources, and support provided throughout their high school career, particularly in the area of post-secondary planning. Guidance counselors informally obtain feedback during post-secondary meetings. Outside of the guidance office or services, teachers sometimes provide informal surveys to students strictly for independent reflection and feedback.

When teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, formally examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice including student
work, common course and common grade-level assessments, individual and school-wide progress in achieving 
the school's 21st century expectations, standardized assessments, data from sending schools, receiving schools, 
and post-secondary institutions, and survey data from current students and alumni, GRHS will be better able to 
ensure that all students achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence
- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school website
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 4 Indicator 11

Conclusions

Grading and reporting practices have yet to be reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning.

While a grade scale and grading system are included in the program of studies, these align with the school's course and department-specific expectations. When asked if a given summative assessment was aligned with the school's core values, beliefs, or school-wide academic or social/civil rubrics, teachers conceded that the alignment was informal. In addition, according to the Endicott survey, results indicate that only 45 percent of teachers are in total agreement that grading practices are regularly reviewed and revised. Teachers indicate that this is the result of the recognized need for formally designated collaboration time for alignment and calibration with department and school-wide rubrics.

Grading and reporting practices are included in the program of studies and the student-parent handbook. The program of studies includes both a grade scale and a grading system which are reviewed on a somewhat regular basis. The majority of teachers' grading practices are aligned with the school's department and course-specific learning expectations which informally align with the school's core values and beliefs about learning as well as the academic, civic, and social expectations. The school has also created district-determined measures for department use.

When the school's grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised and formally aligned with the school's core values and beliefs about learning, it will be better able to assess school-wide and individual student achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 4 Commendations

Commendation
The initial steps taken by the professional staff to create the individual learning plan as a formal process to assess whole-school and individual progress in achieving the school’s 21st century learning expectations

Commendation
The communication of individual student progress in achieving the school's course and department-specific learning expectations by the professional staff to students and their families

Commendation
The informal efforts of the professional staff to collect, disaggregate, and analyze data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement

Commendation
The teachers' communication prior to each unit of study to students of the school's applicable unit-specific learning goals to be assessed

Commendation
The specific and measurable criteria for success, such as corresponding rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement prior to summative assessments

Commendation
The range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments, in each unit of study

Commendation
The informal collaboration by teachers on creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments

Commendation
The teachers' provision of specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work
Commendation

The teachers' regular use of formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning

Commendation

The informal efforts of teachers and administrators to examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, including student work and standardized assessments
Standard 4 Recommendations

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

Recommendation
Develop and implement a formal plan to ensure that professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement

Recommendation
Develop and implement a plan to ensure that the school's professional staff communicates individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families and the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community

Recommendation
Develop and implement a plan to ensure that teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments

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

Recommendation
Develop and implement a plan to ensure that grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning

Recommendation
Develop and implement a plan to ensure that grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning
Standard 5 Indicator 1

Conclusions

Gateway Regional High School consciously and continuously builds a safe, secure, positive, and respectful and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.

Each year, the school distributes student handbooks. Students and parents sign the handbooks, indicating that they have both read and understood the high expectations described in the contents. The handbook includes specific guidelines and procedures for discipline, attendance policies, Gateway's social and civic expectations, and high expectations for behavior and academic rigor. In the spring of 2016, 280 of 333 students in grades 7-11 completed a survey concerning school climate, friendships, and romantic relationships. This survey revealed misconceptions about social norms, which prompted the launch of a campaign to promote healthy relationships, consent, and communication. Students created and displayed posters throughout the school, participated in writing prompts, and attended an interactive play that addressed relationship violence and fallacies. In addition, a men's performance group performed skits for the middle and high school students that addressed consent, dating violence, sexual assault, homophobia, and jealousy. School pride is evident in activities such as Reindeer Games, which is a school spirit event that promotes school climate through emphasizing collaboration and teamwork.

Because the school consciously and continuously builds a safe, secure, positive, and respectful and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning, adults and students enjoy a positive rapport with one another and share ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- department leaders
- school leadership
- school support staff
- school website
- Standard sub-committee
Conclusions

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

Beginning in the fall of 2014, GRHS changed the master schedule from a five-period modified block schedule to a seven-period day to provide students the opportunity to choose a more varied and rigorous core course load as well as elective courses such as band, choir, art, and physical education. The program of studies includes a description of every course organized by departments. The scheduling process is consistent. Grades 8-11 select courses in the spring. The school encourages students to challenge themselves to choose a rigorous academic schedule. The school encourages many to make selections that meet the acceptance requirements of a four-year Massachusetts state college or university. In order to align with that which state and private colleges and universities scrutinize on transcripts, the labeling of courses was changed in 2014, and all advanced level classes were renamed as honors level. Other course offerings which also promote equitable and inclusive academic experiences for all students include Spanish, band, choir, art, welding, physical education, health, academic support, secondary reading, school to career opportunities (internships), online learning, and dual enrollment with Holyoke Community College (HCC), Springfield Technical Community College (STCC), Westfield State University (WSU). The welding program prepares students to enter a post-graduate training program for welding and metal fabrication by earning an entry-level certificate. The special education program employs an inclusion model which promotes student participation in a variety of the courses and programs offered at GRHS.

Because the school is equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, it fosters heterogeneity and supports the achievement of school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee
Conclusions

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.

All students participate in an advisory class period once per week on Wednesdays for 32 minutes. During this time, they communicate and evaluate concerns over expectations, seek homework help, collaborate with peers, or meet for co-curricular activities. In addition, students have a directed study built into their schedule. Students report that they set goals during this time and work on homework. In the fall of 2017, the school counseling department piloted individual learning plans (ILPs) with the Class of 2021 during the directed study. The school intends to have students build a portfolio throughout their high school career which will be used during an exit interview conducted by a panel of GRHS faculty prior to graduation. Students who participate in internships have an internship advisor with whom they meet every day at school. The student and intern advisor collaborate to create a work-based learning plan that includes goals and tasks that the student will complete. Students who are enrolled in special education classes (SPED) have SPED liaisons who meet with students during their academic support class to offer support services and provide frequent check-ins.

Because GRHS offers programs such as advisory, directed study, internships, and SPED liaisons, each student has an adult, in addition to the school counselor, who assists in the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee
Conclusions

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

The loss of the position of curriculum coordinator in 2016 has somewhat impaired the organization and implementation of professional development. Training topics vary year to year and have included social-emotional learning, autism support, and trauma-informed classrooms. Teachers seek out professional development opportunities to strengthen skills in their own areas of expertise, but content-specific professional development has been lacking. The remote location of the school in rural western Massachusetts limits opportunities for collaboration with other school districts.

Teachers participate in extended principal late days on Tuesdays for one hour when there are no faculty meetings and on principal late days on Wednesdays for a half an hour during the weeks that have faculty meetings. Teachers have attended training sessions, met with departments, and worked on specific tasks assigned by the principal. Some of the training sessions on these days included how to respond to sexual assault disclosures and an overview of the social norms campaign on healthy relationships. Outside providers came to discuss the social norms campaign and how domestic violence impacts the Hilltowns, i.e., the surrounding region comprising the areas of Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden Counties. Some teachers participated in workshops regarding the implementation of individual learning plans (ILPs) for the Class of 2021, website and technology, and Rediker training. However, based on the need for more formal time to collaborate as a professional staff, the principal has worked with the faculty to revise the format of these late days. This year, the extended principal late days are directed by the principal. Teachers work on vertical and horizontal alignment. The principal late days are run informally. Teachers sometimes provide extra help, hold parent meetings, or collaborate. In addition, teachers participate in four early release days, which replace four of the faculty meeting days, two half-day professional development days, and two preparation days at the beginning of the school year. Faculty meetings are held bi-weekly and are mostly used to share information regarding school-wide events. An agenda and direction are issued to staff for both faculty meetings and extended principal late days. Professional development has been focused on social-emotional learning, ILPs, and a literacy initiative.

When the principal and professional staff implement a plan to 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; and apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment, they will ensure the improvement of student learning through professional development.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee
Conclusions

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

All teachers are evaluated in a process through Baseline Edge, a secure platform for teachers to self-assess and set goals, and for administrators to provide feedback after observations. Teachers write and provide evidence for one professional learning goal and one student learning goal that adhere to the Common Core and Massachusetts Education Frameworks with a focus on 21st century learning expectations. The evaluation timeline differs based on the professional status of the teachers. Non-professional status teachers set goals every year and professional status teachers set goals every two years. Meetings are conducted to review these goals throughout the timeline of the teacher's evaluation. Every teacher is evaluated by the administration team and feedback is provided through the Baseline Edge program and meetings. The number of observations varies, depending on professional status. Non-professional status teachers have one formal observation, with a pre- and post-meeting to discuss both teaching strategies and student progress, and three unannounced observations. Professional status teachers have one unannounced observation during a two-year cycle.

Because school leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes, there is a systematic focus on improved student learning.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 5 Indicator 6

Conclusions

The organization of time supports research-based instruction and the learning needs of all students; however, it supports professional collaboration to a lesser extent.

In the fall of 2014, the master schedule changed from a five-period modified block schedule to a seven-period schedule to allow students to choose a more rigorous course load as well as more elective courses. In addition, this change provided special education students with a greater variety of elective options beyond their required academic support. There are two types of principal late days: one is extended principal late days which occur on Tuesdays opposite faculty meetings and are of a one-hour duration; regular principal late days run until 2:45 p.m. on the Wednesdays opposite of faculty meetings. During the extended principal late days, departments sometimes collaborate on revision and development of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. In accordance with the Agreement Between The Gateway Regional School District and Gateway Teachers’ Association, Inc., teachers are required to be available after school for half of an hour to help students in areas of need, and this availability is posted on the school's website.

Time is also provided to support student needs during advisory period and during directed study. Advisory periods occur every Wednesday for 32 minutes. During this time, students can meet with their internship advisors, club advisors, teachers, or coaches for extra support, meetings, and check-ins. All teachers are assigned one directed study every other day as part of their teaching schedule. Students are randomly assigned to a directed study based on the teacher's open period. In a directed study, students set a learning goal for the semester and are guided by an educator to complete any necessary work for other classes during this time. An Excel spreadsheet is maintained by the guidance department to track the goals for the freshman and sophomore students' individual learning plans (ILPs).

While the organization of time supports research-based instruction that addresses the learning needs of students, when it supports professional collaboration to a greater extent, the school will be better able to promote professional discourse to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school website
- Standard sub-committee
Conclusions

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

Since the 2014-2015 school year, GRHS has had a ratio of no more than ten students for every one teacher. Teachers and students state that, as a result of small class sizes, teachers are able to get to know their students’ academic strengths and weaknesses. This ratio also allows for more timely feedback to students to improve their work in all academic levels of classes. The special education department has a team of two teachers with an average caseload of six to eight students per teacher. Academic support classes consist of five or fewer students. There are two guidance counselors at the high school. The small caseload of students allows for the counselors to connect individually, in small groups, and in classroom settings for lessons, workshops, and post-secondary planning. The small class sizes and caseloads support individualized educational plans, such as individual learning plans, 504 Plans, and IEPs.

Due to small class sizes and student loads, teachers are able to meet the learning needs of individual students.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- school board
- department leaders
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 5 Indicator 8

Conclusions

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

There is a collaborative working relationship between and among the principal, assistant principal, and other leaders in the school, such as the special education team leader. The principal has an open door policy and is accessible to discuss any concerns or new ideas. The formal job description of the principal's role at GRHS is related to teaching and learning and ensuring the school community's core values and beliefs on learning. The principal provides instructional leadership through directives and agendas for faculty meetings and extended principal late days. These directives include some time devoted to vertical and horizontal alignment of the curriculum. The administration also collaborates with each teacher to write a professional practice goal and student learning goal that is aligned with 21st century learning expectations. All teachers are provided with feedback, both formal and informal, after observations and meet to discuss progress toward their goals. The leadership team comprises the principal, assistant principal, superintendent, support services director, and a member of the central office staff who meet weekly and serve as the leadership and policy-making team for the school. The team's primary responsibilities are to maintain the mission and vision and to give the school community voice in school governance. In 2017, the leadership team worked collaboratively to create a new evaluation system for the paraprofessionals to include a formative and summative meeting with the principal during the school year. This process was designed to ensure greater consistency within the special education department.

Because the principal works with building leaders to provide instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, GRHS is able to ensure that all students have the opportunity to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee
**Standard 5 Indicator 9**

**Conclusions**

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

The building principal welcomes feedback from all GRHS stakeholders through forums such as electronic communication, Google surveys, and informal and formal meetings. The principal is a key component of a number of committees that meet throughout the year to give teachers and parents a voice in the decision-making process; however, parent involvement is somewhat limited. There is a communications council that meets monthly to identify ways that GRHS can improve communication with all stakeholders. This group comprises parents, teachers, school committee members, the principal, the superintendent, and the communications director. In addition, the school council seeks input on the policies and procedures that are in the best interest of the school. There are formal and informal mechanisms, such as surveys, questionnaires, and focus groups, for the collection of data and feedback from students, teachers, and parents. Due to the loss of department chairs in 2015, teachers have lost representation on the leadership team, which somewhat limits their involvement in decision-making.

While some teachers, students, and parents are informally involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making, when more teachers, students, and parents are involved, the school will be better able to promote responsibility and ownership on the part of all stakeholders in the school community.

**Sources of Evidence**

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teachers
- parents
- school board
- department leaders
- school leadership
- school website
- Standard sub-committee
Conclusions

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

The faculty was an integral part of creating and adopting the school's 21st century learning expectations, social and civic expectations, academic expectations, and school-wide rubrics. Due to small classes and the fact that many teachers have the same students over the course of their high school career, teachers are better able to get to know their students' strengths and weaknesses. Teachers informally collaborate to discuss student achievement, course content, and student engagement. Teachers take the initiative to maintain curricular currency through professional development and collaboration. Advisory class, designed to make the overall education experience for every student more personalized, meets every Wednesday, with teachers serving as informal academic advisers for nine to fifteen students. Students also use this time to meet with clubs. Many teachers serve as advisers to clubs such as National Honor Society, Best Buddies, student council, and the outdoor club.

Because teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school, GRHS is able to increase student engagement in learning.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 5 Indicator 11

Conclusions

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

The school board meetings and the superintendent's office are located at GRHS, facilitating a high level of collaboration. Student-focused changes were implemented due to the collaborative efforts of the district's leadership. For example, the schedule change from a five-period day to seven-period day supports students' needs to have access to more course offerings and a more rigorous course load. In addition, GRHS maintained the division of the middle school and high school, instead of transitioning to a grades 7-12 school in response to budget cuts. This decision was student-focused. District leaders also fostered a new initiative to allow students the ability to follow individualized learning plans and provided stipended positions to continue to develop this plan. The principal regularly presents information, such as new initiatives such as the literacy audit and MCAS data, to the school committee.

Because the school board, superintendent, and the principal are collaborative and are reflective, GHRS is able to ensure that all students achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teachers
- parents
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee
Conclusions

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

A primary example of the principal's having sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school is displayed in the principal's ability to propose and obtain a budget passed by the six towns that make up the school district. GRHS and the district have protocols in place that ensure that students have a safe learning environment. The principal has been involved in an initiative to provide effective communication throughout the school and works closely with public relations and grants. The principal spearheaded an academic council that was put into place in 2014 that consisted of department team leaders to discuss strategic planning, budget concerns, school-wide initiatives and events, and curriculum. The leadership team helped to develop a two-year and five-year targeted plan to perform curriculum review; worked on teacher leadership through horizontal and vertical collaboration; updated core values, beliefs, and learning expectations; created a parent community communication plan (FY 20); and strengthened classroom technology. In past years, team leaders relayed all information shared by the principal to their departments to gather feedback and suggestions. Due to the elimination of team leaders, the academic council no longer exists, and the principal bears all of the responsibility for decision-making.

Because the school board and the superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school, the principal is able to provide leadership that incorporates the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- parents
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee


**Standard 5 Commendations**

**Commendation**

The school community’s safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all

**Commendation**

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

**Commendation**

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

**Commendation**

The principal's and professional staff's informal engagement in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning, use of resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices, and the application of the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment in order to improve student learning

**Commendation**

The school leaders' regular use of research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning

**Commendation**

The organization of time that supports research-based instruction and the learning needs of all students

**Commendation**

The student load and class size that enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students

**Commendation**

The instructional leadership that is rooted in the school’s core values, beliefs, and learning expectations provided
by the principal, working with other building leaders

Commendation

The informal involvement of teachers, students, and parents in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership

Commendation

The initiative and leadership exercised by the teachers essential to the improvement of the school to increase students' engagement in learning

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

The school board’s and superintendent’s affording the principal sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school
Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to ensure that teachers have opportunities for professional development to engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning and consistently apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Recommendation

Develop and implement a formal plan, in order to improve student learning through professional development, to ensure that 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; and apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to ensure that the organization of time supports greater research-based instruction and professional collaboration among teachers.

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to ensure that teachers, students, and parents are more formally involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.
Conclusions

Gateway Regional 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.

All students are consistently identified through the thumbs-up/thumbs-down process, the Gateway school-based health center affiliated with Hilltown Community Health Center (SBHC), and directly from the student assistance team (SAT). Thumbs up/thumbs down is a procedure used at faculty meetings by the counseling staff to determine students who are having difficulties. By more than one faculty member indicating a thumbs down, counselors learn whom they need to address. The staff at the SBHC conducts an evaluation of drug and alcohol abuse, safety at home, and various medical issues in a student's life when a student uses their services for the first time. During the SAT biweekly meeting, new students experiencing difficulties are discussed. The SAT includes guidance counselors, the adjustment counselor, assistant principal, school nurse, and psychologist, as well as the nurse and psychotherapist from the SBHC. At the SAT meetings, coordination of services takes place, and a staff member who is responsible for follow through to make sure the directives of this team are met is assigned.

Because the school has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, all students have the opportunity to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee
Conclusions

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

The dissemination of information about student support services includes open houses, freshman orientation night for all incoming ninth graders and their parents/guardians, college planning nights for parents, phone calls from the guidance counselors, and various newsletter articles. According to the Endicott survey, 80 percent of parents agree that information about available student support services is provided to them, and 75 percent of students agree that they know who to ask for help at school if they have a personal problem.

Because GRHS provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services, the school is able to ensure all students achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 6 Indicator 3

Conclusions

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

Whether a student is part of the general education population or requires more targeted services, technology is available throughout the entire student population to enhance instruction and learning, to track student health data, and to provide career services. The school uses Rediker to access demographic and contact information. Rediker and its Plus Portals are used for academic counseling. There is frequent use of Google Documents to share and comment on individual learning plans for ninth and tenth graders. Students access lessons and complete career inventories during Freshman Seminar. Student interns also use this application when researching careers and in creating their final presentations. Students use the College Board website to assist with PSAT score analysis so that they can improve their SAT scores. The Khan Academy website is used in conjunction with PSAT scores to create personalized study plans for the SAT, based upon identified strengths and weaknesses. Seniors use the Common Application to seek admission to colleges. Guidance staff also uses this site to upload recommendations, transcripts, and other required documents.

The special education department uses a variety of assistive technologies to assist special needs students. Hearing-impaired students have sound fields, FM systems, and software that work with a variety of hearing aids. Visually-impaired students use closed-caption television cameras, Job Access With Speech (JAWS) software, digital braillers and iPads. Severely autistic students have access to iPads that have a variety of communication platforms that allow someone who is non-verbal to communicate. They also use Rediker to access demographic and contact information.

The health services department uses software to chart every nurse visit; create monthly data reports, individual health care plans, emergency reports, and accident reports; track mandated screenings and referrals; and monitor immunization records. The health services department uses Rediker to access demographic and contact information and is enrolled in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts's Virtual Gateway Services to track immunizations. This department also files reports with the state's Department of Public Health, including monthly data reports, asthma and diabetes surveys, head injury reports, and end-of-year data reports that include information about special health care needs, body mass index (BMI), and other important data. All support services use email and all-call phone calls to communicate with staff and parents.

Because support services staff consistently use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student, the school is able to enhance student learning and well-being.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 6 Indicator 4

Conclusions

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 and group meetings with all students; and deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers; however, they have yet to deliver a written, developmental program and use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

GRHS has a 1:100 ratio of guidance counselors to students. They meet at least yearly with each student regarding graduation plans and scheduling for subsequent years. The guidance counselors also provide post-secondary planning lessons in the English classes on a regular basis, and they meet with students to set goals for the individual learning plans (ILPs) for freshmen and sophomores.

Guidance counselors are readily available students and parents whenever needs arise. The adjustment counselor provides regular, ongoing, individual, and group counseling such as a healthy relationship and self-esteem group for girls and a healthy masculinity group for boys. Most referrals are made to the SBHC which has several clinicians available to students. Further, counselors make referrals to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and other area services as needed. Social-emotional counseling takes up most of the guidance counselors' time.

The guidance department has yet to develop a formal, written developmental guidance curriculum. In addition, the counseling staff has yet to develop a formal process to collect and aggregate data to determine if their services are effective.

While 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 and group meetings with all students; and deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers, when they deliver a written, developmental program and use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, they will be better able to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 6 Indicator 5

Conclusions

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

GRHS has been awarded funding from the Essential School Health Services (ESHS) through the Department of Public Health (DPH) for several years. The school meets the criteria of the grant by continuously updating best practices, education, data collection and reporting to ensure that the program meets the best standards of care available in a school setting. Gateway Middle and High School has one full-time, certified registered nurse leader (a ratio of 1:200) and one resource nurse who is on-call from the Littleville Elementary School campus located four miles away. Having the availability of a resource nurse allows the nurse leader to attend frequent IEP, 504, and student support meetings and to advise the Best Buddies program.

Screenings include diabetes, asthma, immunizations, suicidal thoughts, drug use/abuse, and others. The health services staff uses Professional Software for Nurses, Inc.'s SNAP Health Center. This program is used to chart every nurse visit; create monthly data reports, individual health care plans, emergency reports, accident reports; track mandatory screenings and referrals; conduct surveillance of immunizations. Health screenings are conducted in grade 9 for detection of scoliosis. SBIRT (Screening Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment) screenings are also completed; this screening is designed to identify students at risk for substance use and addiction. SBIRT screenings also work to foster positive decision-making through motivational interviewing. GRHS recently participated in a research study with Harvard Medical school and Boston Children's Hospital to gather data on the effectiveness of SBIRT in schools. Signs of Suicide Prevention Program (SOS) and depression screenings are administered to 7th and 9th graders. Screening results lead to referrals to mental health care services in the community for those students identified. In grade 10, students have a Body Mass Index (BMI) screening as well as vision and hearing screenings.

Recently, the school health personnel and administration worked with the Hampden County District Attorney’s offices on an educational substance abuse prevention presentation that was shared with high school students. The health services department also conducts education and outreach around life-threatening allergies, EpiPen use, and school emergency protocols with staff every year, helping to ensure that all staff can detect and assist appropriately during medical emergencies. The nurse leader also serves on the student advisory team (SAT) which provides health and education professionals opportunities to share some information and to collaborate in order to best meet the needs of Gateway students.

The Gateway Middle and High School Complex houses SBHC which includes a medical office with a four-person staff consisting of a physician, a nurse practitioner, a psychotherapist, and a nutritionist. SBHC also includes a dental office (Gator Grins) which provides comprehensive dental care for students and community members.

SBHC is separate from the school nursing program, but the two entities are in frequent communication. The school nurse can make referrals to the center whenever deemed necessary or beneficial. SBHC accepts private health insurance and MassHealth. Forms are available to obtain MassHealth if currently uninsured, and funding for visits can be arranged retroactively if necessary. The school nurse maintains two sets of records for most documentation, both in digital and physical form. Both are kept private and secure, in accordance with state and federal regulations. Hard copies include parent and doctor notes, prescription requests, detailed health reports from specialists, and other documentation. All communications with parents/guardians are conducted via fax, phone, or in person and are always in accordance with all FERPA and HIPPA laws. The nurse also publicizes important messages and initiatives through posters displayed throughout the school. The nurse has initiated both a Suicide Awareness campaign and a Stop the Bleed campaign through which bystanders become trained, equipped, and empowered to help in a bleeding emergency.
The nurse communicates with students, parents, and community members face-to-face. The nurse adapts programs, offerings, and education based on monthly reports from the state, updates from the DPH, and feedback from the administration, staff, and the Gateway communication committee which comprises administrators, teachers, parents, and community members. The nurse communicates with parents, staff, and community members via the Gateway Breaking News (online digital weekly distribution), all-calls for emergencies, and letters to parents.

Because GRHS'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, and use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, they can improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
Conclusions

Library/media services are somewhat integrated into curriculum and instructional practices, yet do not 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; and 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.

Currently, the certified library/media center director and library/media aide divide their time between two elementary schools and the middle/high school library/media center. The facility is open three out of five days per week before classes begin, open each school day, but not open every day after school. The library/media services director is not on site on Fridays. The library/media services staff conducts outreach to departments, but full implementation and development of curricular supports are limited by the lack of dedicated staff time.

The library/media services staff has created a vertical library/media curriculum, but it has yet to be actively engaged in the implementation of the curriculum throughout the school. Library/media center staff provides a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum. These include print materials, such as an improved fiction section, a non-fiction section, and online resources such as specialized subscription databases including Pro Quest's CultureGrams and Historical Newspapers and free databases provided by the state of Massachusetts.

The library/media services staff is responsive to students' interest and needs in order to support independent learning. One way in which the library/media center personnel do this is to search out online classes to support individualized student interest when no such classes are offered at GRHS. The library/media services director searches Edgenuity, Virtual High School (VHS), and other online course vendors in order to accommodate individual student requests.

The library/media services personnel conduct informal ongoing assessments using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. One example of this is the recent collection analysis undertaken which indicated that fiction choices were outdated. Recent and interesting fiction titles were then added to the collection to ensure that students have more choice and variety in their free reading selections.

While library/media services provide a wide range of materials, technologies and other information services in support of the school's curriculum; are responsive to students’ interests and needs in order to support independent learning; and conduct informal ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community to improve services; when library/media services are more actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum, and the facility is more available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school, the program will be better able to support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- teacher interview
• teachers
• students
• department leaders
• school leadership
• Standard sub-committee
Standard 6 Indicator 7

Conclusions

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 and provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students, but have yet to perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

GRHS has five, full-time special education teachers in the high school. Additionally, the school has a licensed teacher for the visually impaired who is also a licensed mobility specialist. There are two paraprofessionals to support three recently added students with visual impairments. GRHS also employs two full-time autism specialists for the district and a full-time district-wide special education director on site. The lone adjustment counselor, who has a caseload of students ranging from grades 6 to 12, provides counseling indicated in Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Twelve paraprofessionals are available to assist students in the classroom. The high school has two guidance counselors who facilitate all students receiving 504 accommodations. An ELL teacher is also on staff to assist students with communication and educational needs while assisting in language immersion. GRHS has a teacher in a substantially separate room for students with severe behavior issues. Teachers and special educators communicate regularly through personal interaction and via G Suite. They share information regarding coursework that is required for each student so the students are supported both in and out of the classroom. This support is also available to the teacher in the behavior classroom. Seventy-six of the 220 students at GRHS have a special education or 504 Plan. Of these, 17 are in a substantially separate special education classroom. All students with plans are receiving the least restrictive environment that meets their individual needs. The special education and 504 Plan staff have yet to collect and aggregate data to determine if their services are effective.

While 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 and provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students, when support services perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, they will be better able to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teachers
- students
- parents
- department leaders
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 6 Commendations

Commendation

The 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

Commendation

The provision of information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services

Commendation

The support services staff's use of technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student

Commendation

The counseling services that 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 and group meetings with all students, and deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers

Commendation

The school's health services that 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

Commendation

The library/media services' provision of a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum, response to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning, and 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

Commendation

The support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, that has an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff, and provide inclusive
learning opportunities for all students to ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations
Standard 6 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to ensure that school counseling services deliver a written, developmental program and use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to ensure that 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, and ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school to ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to ensure that support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners 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.
Standard 7 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The community and district's governing body provides dependable and adequate funding for a wide range of school programs and services; sufficient professional and support staff; a full range of technology support; and sufficient equipment and instructional materials and supplies; however, provision of funding for ongoing professional development and curriculum revision has been less dependable.

The superintendent works with the district towns' finance committees and boards of selectmen to put forth the rationale and factors that drive the budget. Gateway Regional School District (GRSD) relies on critical federal and state grant programs to supplement and support the operating budget, but, over the years, the state government has reduced support of school budgets greatly from 60 percent to 40 percent, significantly putting the responsibility of funding the budget on the district's six towns. In recent years, the district towns have been cautious and slow to pass the budgets presented. The budget for 2018 passed on the third version. In 2017, the state administered a 1/12 budget. The budget for 2016 was greatly impacted by the withdrawal of the town of Worthington from the district in 2015. The state provided only one-time mitigation money. The financial repercussions of the withdrawal by Worthington from the district continue to affect the district.

GRSD strives to provide programs and services that match student needs and interests, despite challenging budgets constraints. GRHS and the district as a whole serve its member towns by being its community center. Among the many programs, services, and facilities, the district provides are an accessible athletic facility, a well-equipped performing arts center, a library/media center, an award-winning food services program, and a wellness center. The district also houses and gives access to health services, including the Gateway school-based health center, which includes mental health counseling, and the Gator Grins Dental Outreach Program. The Gateway school-based health center provides services that cover immunizations, physical exams, emergency care, first aid, prescriptions, mental health counseling, nutrition counseling, and treatment of illnesses. The Gator Grins Dental Outreach Program provides access to quality dental care which includes dental exams, x-rays, dental cleanings, and emergency dental care. Currently, 550 students are receiving services from the Health Center, and 360 students are receiving services from Gator Grins. The Gateway school-based health center and the Gator Grins Dental Outreach Program will not deny service to any student for inability to pay. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health provides funding and special grants for the program. While district staffing numbers have increased slightly over the past few years, the increase has been mainly in special education in order to bring students back who had been educated outside of the district.

Overall funding for professional development has diminished in recent years within the Gateway Regional School District. Despite having some professional development in-house, there has been a reduction in money allocated for teachers seeking to attend content area workshops and seminars outside of school. Teachers who may want to attend outside professional development events have been told that, although they may attend such events, there will be no financial reimbursement.

The district invests in technology. The District employs a three-person technology department. There is one instructional technology help-desk specialist. The help-desk specialist assists with technology such as iPad, MacBook, and Chromebook setup and deployment. Two other technology staff members maintain the network infrastructure and its information systems. GRSD currently does not have a director of technology position to oversee technology and information management operations. This position was cut a number of years ago as the district budget was declining. Currently, the superintendent performs the duties of the director of technology. There has been a switch to Chromebooks and PC laptops which reduces costs and allows funding for technology to remain consistent.

The instructional equipment is well maintained and adequately supplied despite budget constraints. All rooms have projectors and speaker systems. Many teachers have Smartboards in their classrooms. Departments such as art have sufficient computers and software for graphic arts classes. The wood technology department has the machinery and tools to run its woodworking classes.
While the community and district's governing body provide dependable and adequate funding for a wide range of school programs and services; sufficient professional and support staff; a full range of technology support; and sufficient equipment and instructional materials and supplies, when the community and district's governing body also provides dependable and adequate funding for ongoing professional development and curriculum revision, it will be better able to enhance teaching and learning.

Sources of Evidence
- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 7 Indicator 2

Conclusions

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

The school has two maintenance employees as well as one custodian who work during the school day. Three custodians work the night shift. The school places importance on the appearance of the facilities and grounds. The onsite maintenance team completes routine repairs. The school subcontracts complex repairs to local technicians. The district owns a substantial array of snow removal and landscaping equipment and performs the work with district employees. Scheduled maintenance on all the equipment is done onsite.

The district has implemented a preventative maintenance plan to ensure required repairs, periodic maintenance, and cleanliness of the school. To help ensure that projects are completed within the budget, the school has invested in training custodial team members under the guidelines of the Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official Program (MCPPO). The school hosts the class several times each year in the distance learning center. Some of the recent district improvements include the installation of an engineered well system, the remodeled and landscaped courtyard, a new equipment storage building, new epoxy floor treatments, and rubberized flooring in the gymnasium.

Classrooms and common areas are cleaned daily. According to the Endicott survey, 100 percent of teachers report that the school is clean and well-maintained and that needed repairs are completed in a timely manner. Additionally, 98 percent of parents report that the school is clean and well maintained.

Because the school develops, plans and funds programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant, to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment, and to keep the school clean on a daily basis, it is able to deliver curriculum, instruction, programs, and services.

Sources of Evidence

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

The community somewhat funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements.

The school implements long-range plans that address a variety of needs; however, the school district budget has declined steadily over the past fifteen years, making it difficult for the school to consistently complete all of the plans that are put into place. The school district continues work toward Gateway RSD 2025, a master plan for the improvement of the school district based upon data from the greater school community related to meeting student educational needs. This plan includes a range of subjects from curriculum and instruction to facilities maintenance and capital planning while also focusing on the financial sustainability of both the district and its member towns. Administrators revisit this plan each summer during an annual administrative retreat to determine goals for the following year. The principal reviews the district enrollment numbers every fall to determine staffing needs for the next year. The district enrollment has been declining over the past ten years. Ten years ago, there were approximately 1,800 students in the district. Today, there are approximately 800 students. The district lost the technology director position due to budget reductions. As a result, the technology plan has not been updated since 2012. Although budget cuts have forced the school to function with less, the maintenance and custodial staff do all they can do to ensure the building is clean and well maintained.

While the community somewhat funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements, when it provides more dependable and adequate funding, the school will be better able to ensure the achievement of the 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 7 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget.

The budget process begins with the principal's collection of requests for supplies, instructional materials, equipment, equipment repair, and technology needs from individual teachers. The principal then uses these requests for educational supplies, textbooks, and equipment. The high school budget is then brought to the district administrative team to integrate with the overall school system budget. Initially, two budgets are created. One is the ideal, requested budget. The other is the "make do" budget, based on a per-student allotment. As the budget becomes more clearly defined by the school committee, the principal makes decisions, often with input from individual teachers, about needed adjustments to meet these expectations. After the final central office review, the overall budget for the district is compiled. It is then presented for review by the school committee and town council members.

Because faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget, GRHS has the opportunity to fund and implement a program which achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 7 Indicator 5

Conclusions

The school site and plant support the delivery of high-quality school programs and services.

The building was last renovated in 2004, yet still looks as if it is a brand-new building. Due to declining enrollment over the past ten years, there are more than enough classrooms available for instruction. Classrooms also have ample space for students to complete effective work. Science laboratory facilities are safe and well equipped. There is ample room for lab preparation. The library/media center has appropriate space for group instruction as well as independent research and inquiry. The cafeteria and the food preparation area are sufficient in size and well equipped to meet the needs of the students and staff. The visual and performing arts, physical education, technology, and special education spaces are adequate to deliver high-quality school programs and services. There is acceptable and suitable space for administrative offices, private conference rooms, guidance reception, offices, and private conference rooms. There is a health office, and the Gateway school-based health center is housed at the school.

Because the school site and plant support the delivery of high-quality school programs and services, GRHS is able to ensure that all students achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 7 Indicator 6

Conclusions

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.

The school is up to date on building inspections, AHERA regulations, water testing, including lead and copper, boiler inspections, and elevator inspection. Additionally, district maintenance staff adhere strictly to local fire, health, and safety regulations. There is an annual walk through with the town building inspector to obtain the district's occupancy permits. The school uses and maintains its own well for drinking water. The sprinkler system is fed by both the Springfield water main and town water. GRHS has an indoor and outdoor integrated pest plan on file with the state. Material safety data sheets are catalogued and stored in the science area, the superintendent's office, the welding shop, and the custodial area. All areas of the school have adequate ventilation and temperature control. Interior classrooms without windows have air conditioning. All areas of the building are handicap accessible. Maintenance issues are emailed to the custodians or entered into the district's help desk system.

Because 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, the environment at GRHS is conducive to teaching and learning.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- panel presentation
- facility tour
- teachers
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 7 Indicator 7

Conclusions

All professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school.

Covering 175 square miles across six towns, Gateway faces unique challenges in enlisting parent and community member involvement in the school. While a majority of homes have internet access, a lack of connection speed impedes this means of communication. The school reaches families through the GRSD app on mobile phones. Currently, there are approximately 700 subscribers. According to the Endicott survey, 80 percent of students agree that their parents have the opportunity to meet teachers, building administrators, and school counselors. The professional staff reaches out through the comprehensive, up-to-the-minute, school district website. It includes teacher web pages and contact information. The school employs a weekly web-based newsletter. There are weekly articles in the local, widely circulated newspapers. There are frequently updated social media accounts. There is a text-messaging system for teachers to send information to cell phones and the school uses robocalls, a phone call system providing important information to all faculty, staff, and students.

GRHS also encourages families, alumni, and community members, especially those who have been less connected to the school, to participate in school programs and support groups. The school has invited families, alumni, and community members to volunteer and chaperone at school functions and outings. The school invites school community members to participate in the athletic, chorus, and band booster organizations. It holds an annual senior citizens holiday luncheon. There is a homecoming weekend. The school also offers opportunities for community members to serve on committees such as the health advisory council, school council, and the Chapter 74 vocational welding advisory committee.

Town officials attend monthly school committee meetings specifically dedicated to the school budget. Town officials and school committee members also participate in the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools (MARS) to gain mutual understanding of budget issues and the school budget process. In spite of the unique challenge of the district encompassing six towns, 175 square miles, and limited internet access in some areas, the professional staff works hard to actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out to those families who have been less connected with the school.

Because all professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school, GRHS is able to involve all stakeholders in the school community.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teachers
- parents
- school board
- community members
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 7 Indicator 8

Conclusions

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

The guidance department coordinates job shadowing, dual enrollment opportunities, and internships. The high school life skills program matches students with job sites in the community. The inclusive concurrent enrollment initiative (ICEI) at Westfield State University serves students with developmental disabilities. The school offers metal shop externships, the Red Cross club, the outdoors club/scenic rivers and wildlife group, Best Buddies International, entrepreneur club, Gay/Straight Alliance, and online coursework. On-site, the school provides the Gateway Foundation and Hilltown Community Health Center’s school-based health care and Gator Grins school-based dental care. The school partners with three different colleges or universities to offer students the opportunity to earn college credits while enrolled at GRHS. Students also have the opportunity to participate in job shadowing and internships in partnership with local business organizations.

Because the school develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning, all students have opportunities to achieve the school’s 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teachers
- students
- school board
- department leaders
- school leadership
- school website
- Standard sub-committee
Standard 7 Commendations

Commendation

The community and the district's governing body's provision of dependable funding for a wide range of school programs and services, sufficient professional and support staff, a full range of technology support, sufficient equipment, and sufficient instructional materials and supplies

Commendation

The school's development and funding of programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant, to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment, and to keep the school clean on a daily basis

Commendation

The active involvement of the faculty and building administrators in the development and implementation of the budget

Commendation

The school site and plant that support the delivery of high-quality school programs and services

Commendation

The school's maintenance of 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

Commendation

The professional staff's active engagement of parents and families as partners in each student's education and the outreach specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school

Commendation

The school's development of productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning
Standard 7 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to ensure that the community and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for ongoing professional development and curriculum revision

Recommendation

Develop and implement a plan to ensure that the community funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements
FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

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

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

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

The visiting team would like to express thanks to the community for the hospitality and welcome. The school community completed an exemplary self-study that clearly identified the school's strengths and areas of need. The time and effort dedicated to the self-study and preparation for the visit ensured a successful accreditation visit.
Principals of member schools must report to the Commission within sixty (60) days of occurrence any substantive change in the school which has a negative impact on the school's ability to meet any of the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The report of a substantive change must describe the change itself as well as detail the impact on the school's ability to meet the Standards. The following are potential areas where there might be negative substantive changes which must be reported:

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

Chair(s)
Chair: Joseph Damplo - New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.
Assistant Chair: Pamela Gould - Sandwich Public Schools

Team Members
Paula Brault - Hinsdale Middle/High School
Heather Cowap Salemme - Groton-Dunstable Regional High School
Sarah Dinnan - Terryville High School
Kerri Kearney - Manchester Public Schools
John Charles Keene - Murdock High School
Laurie Kustra - Windsor Locks High School
Susan Mason - Easthampton High School
Len Rabinowitz - Ashland High School
Susan Thulin - Northbridge High School
Linda Verge - Tahanto Regional Middle/High School