

New England Association of
Schools and Colleges



Commission on Public Secondary Schools

Report of the Visiting Committee for
Wilmington High School

Wilmington, Massachusetts
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STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

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

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

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

Teaching and Learning Standards

- Mission and Expectations for Student Learning
- Curriculum
- Instruction
- Assessment of Student Learning

Support of Teaching and Learning Standards

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

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

Preparation for the Evaluation Visit - The School Self-Study

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

The self-study of Wilmington High School extended over a period of 16 school months from December 2008 to February 2010.

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

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Committee

A visiting committee of 14 evaluators was assigned by the Commission on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate Wilmington High School. The Committee members spent four days in Wilmington, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students and parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school meets the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented public schools, central office administrators, and the public, diverse points of view were brought to bear on the evaluation of Wilmington School.

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- more than 40 hours shadowing a variety of students during parts of the school day
- a total of 15 hours of classroom observation (in addition to time shadowing students)
- numerous informal observations in and around the school
- tours of the facility
- individual meetings with 28 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers
- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

Each conclusion on the report was agreed to by team consensus. Sources of evidence for each conclusion drawn by the visiting committee appear in parenthesis in the Standards sections of

the report. The seven Standards for Accreditation reports include commendations and recommendations that in the team's judgment will be helpful to the school as it works to improve teaching and learning and to better meet Commission Standards.

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

Overview of Findings

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

Wilmington High School can be characterized as a school that is well –supported by its community, including parents, central administration, and the school committee. The community sees the principal as the school's educational leader who celebrates the accomplishments the school has made, but recognizes its growth areas as well.

Students are the heart of Wilmington High School. They are well-connected to the school and community. They are thoughtful to include student with disabilities in routine high school activities when they can. The principal listens to the voice of many groups of students. A variety of extra- and co-curricular activities at Wilmington High School support the school's philosophy to support growth and achievement for all learners.

The administration could not have done any more to help facilitate the accreditation visit and make all team members feel a part of the Wilmington High School experience. Teachers were readily available and helpful from the Sunday afternoon visit through Wednesday afternoon. The ability to have teachers willing to have conversations about their teaching, student expectations, and the mission statement allowed the visiting committee a glimpse of many classroom activities.

Teaching and Learning at Wilmington High School

The Wilmington High School community has created a safe, nurturing environment for its students. Much work has been done in the last five years to revise the mission and expectations. Stakeholders from the educational community were included in this revision. The mission statement and corresponding expectations have guided the development of new community service graduation requirement.

The high school is still looking for ways to report out on the academic, social, and civic expectations. This data should be used to guide curriculum, instruction, and assessment at Wilmington High School. As well, teachers need to regularly emphasize how their curriculum, instruction, and assessment are connected to the mission and expectations. Each academic department has identified a primary and secondary expectation for which it is responsible.

Clear and consistent guidelines for usage of school-wide rubrics are needed at Wilmington High School. Curriculum guides should suggest instructional strategies and identify assessment techniques that use school-wide rubrics. All students should be challenged using inquiry, higher-order thinking skills, problem-solving, and authentic application of knowledge. Additional curriculum planning time (CPT) time is necessary for teachers to meet by department and in interdisciplinary groupings for the purpose of improving instructional practices and analyzing data.

Wilmington High School has benefited from the expansion of technology in the classroom, like SMARTBoards and MIMIO technology. Teacher-driven professional development from its own Wilmington University allows faculty members the opportunity for professional growth, yet formal inter- and intra-departmental collaboration is needed.

The visiting committee was also impressed with the overall care and concern for its students, particularly of the Lifeskills students. There was evidence of widespread usage of course specific rubrics and varied assessments.

Support of Teaching and Learning at Wilmington High School

Principal Eric Tracy is seen as the educational leader of Wilmington High School. Using his five-year plan the guidance department, health services, and the library are committed to student success. The library's facility is in need of updating, however, and the librarian should be included in curricula decisions at Wilmington High School. A library catalog automation process will help to elevate current library standards. Wilmington High School needs to develop increased partnerships with higher education in the town's vicinity.

Wilmington High School's culture is filled with pride. The principal regularly acknowledges and celebrates student success. Wilmington High School should study and implement heterogeneous grouping of students so all students benefit from a high level of rigor. Although there is a high level of participation in student-sponsored events, clubs, and sports, there is no formal personalization program in the school.

Wilmington High School's facility has been compromised by decades of usage. The accreditation's visit was concurrent with an extended, sustained period of rain that resulted in showing the team many of the structural problems of an old building. Leaks from a compromised roof were commonplace. The structure of the building and its limitations necessitate creativity in storage. Technology improvements and upgrades become problematic because of the age of the building. A building committee has been established to look at the future needs of Wilmington High School, including the potential of a building project. Administrators, teachers, parents, and students would like to see a new, 21st century Wilmington High School that supports the school's mission and expectations.

School and Community Report

The Community

The town of Wilmington is located fifteen miles north of Boston and is characterized by a rich history of agriculture and industry. The first settlers arrived in 1665 and Wilmington was incorporated in 1730 as an independent town amidst British colonialism. Wilmington is situated on 17.2 miles of the Ipswich River's watershed. A suburban community in northeastern Massachusetts, Wilmington is bordered by Andover on the north, North Reading and Reading on the east, Woburn on the south, and Burlington, Billerica, and Tewksbury on the west. Wilmington lies in close proximity to Route 93, Route 95, and Route 495, providing residents accessibility to the economic, cultural, and medical centers of Greater Boston. Wilmington is also the place the Baldwin apple was discovered.

In 1835, the Boston and Lowell Railroad was constructed and resulted in immediate development. Residential development has had a strong impact on the demographics of Wilmington in recent years and a steady growth in population has occurred. According to the 2007 census, the town's population has increased 2-3 percent over the last three years with a total population of 23,066. The racial makeup of the town is 96.31 percent Caucasian, 0.41 percent African American, 0.08 percent Native American, 2.03 percent Asian, 0.42 percent from other races, and 0.74 percent from two or more races. English serves as the primary language, although other spoken languages include Portuguese, Spanish, Italian and many Eastern culture dialects. In Wilmington, the median family income is \$85,800 and the average price of a home is \$381,505. Four percent of students are eligible for free lunch and 1.6 percent of students are eligible for reduced lunch. Due to the small percentage of low income housing within the community, Wilmington High School receives no Chapter One funding. The current unemployment rate in Wilmington is 4.5 percent.

There are a wide range of businesses in Wilmington including service-oriented enterprises, health care facilities, financial services, wholesale, retail, trade and manufacturers. Wilmington is also home to many defense and aerospace industries such as Textron Defense Systems and Ametek Industries. A revitalization project has started on Main Street with plans to include several new pharmacies, local and chain restaurants, and retail stores.

The total school population of Wilmington is currently 3785. Students are serviced by six public elementary schools. They are the Boutwell School (K) with an enrollment of 166, the Wildwood School (K) with an enrollment of 188, the Shawsheen Elementary School (1-3) with an enrollment of 380, the Woburn Street School (1-3) with an enrollment of 478, the North Intermediate School (4-5) with an enrollment of 234, and the West Intermediate (4-5) with an enrollment of 282. The Wilmington Middle School (6-8) enrolls 962 students and the current enrollment at Wilmington High School is 977. The school population has experienced significant growth over the past 10 years resulting in a redistricting initiative highlighted by the building of a 1000 student Middle School. The Abundant Life Christian School, which is the only other school in Wilmington, is a private K-8 school.

Wilmington High School's per pupil expenditure in 2007 was \$10,029 compared to the state average of \$11,859. In FY07, state, federal and other resources accounted for 32 percent of all

funds received in the district, leaving 68 percent of funding to be obtained through local resources. Fifty-seven percent of local property taxes are allocated to the public schools.

The School and the Students

Wilmington High School (WHS) includes students in grades 9 - 12 with a total enrollment of 978 students, 461 male and 517 females. The ethnic, racial, and cultural composition of the students at WHS reflects the racial makeup of the town with 92.6 percent Caucasian, 1.4 percent African American, 3.5 percent Asian, 1.2 percent Hispanic, and 1.2 percent from two or more races. The school population has remained constant over the past ten years. The average dropout rate for the past two years is 1.6 percent, the average daily student attendance rate is 95 percent, and the average attendance rate among teachers is 95 percent.

At WHS there are 81 teachers who each teach five classes with an average load of 100 students and six Curriculum Team Leaders who each teach three classes. The average teacher to student ratio is 14:1 and the average class size is 18 (2007-2008). Students attend for 180 days and for a minimum of 1008 hours. There are five early release days each year during which faculty review and revise curriculum. The school's schedule includes five 50-minute periods and one 90-minute period each day. Common planning time is not formally scheduled.

All students are enrolled in at least seven classes. In addition to regular course offerings, students have the opportunity to choose from numerous Virtual High School courses. The course selection process begins with teachers making recommendations for placement of students in core academic/required courses. In most areas, 3-4 levels are offered, College Preparatory B, College Preparatory A, Honors or Advanced Placement. The percentage of students enrolled in Honors courses is 46 percent, and the percentage of students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses is 7.2 percent. Approximately 9.9 percent of students receive Special Education services and 0.4 percent of students are in ELL classes. All students are required to successfully complete four years of English, three years of mathematics, science, and Social Studies, 1 semester of Health/Physical Education each year, and one semester each of fine/performing arts and business technology each year. Many students choose to take a foreign language as well. In addition, starting with the class of 2012, each student must complete 50 hours of community service over four years in order to meet graduation requirements. The science department at WHS offers an Aquaculture class which is affiliated with the Cat Cove Marine Project at Salem State College. The students in this class interact with professors at the college. The Biotechnology course also offered in the science department at WHS is affiliated with the City Lab bus from Boston University. Students enrolled in the Biotech classes will be conducting biotech labs on the bus when it arrives in January.

WHS offers a variety of co-curricular activities for its students including athletic programs, marching, concert, and jazz bands, a strings orchestra, choral groups, drama programs and approximately 30 different clubs. Approximately 66 percent of students at WHS participate in one or more of these activities each year.

Of the 2008 graduating class, 71.9 percent of graduates attended four-year colleges, 23.5 percent enrolled in two-year colleges, three percent entered the workforce and one percent entered the military. Graduates take advantage of the outstanding educational opportunities available in the New England area as they choose from such colleges as the University of Massachusetts at

Amherst, the University of Massachusetts at Lowell, Boston University, Northeastern University, Merrimack College, and the University of New Hampshire.

During the past six years, WHS engaged in a number of initiatives to improve curriculum, instruction and assessment. During the 2005 school year, the principal unveiled the five-year plan for WHS. The plan was presented to the faculty and the superintendent as well as to the school committee. This plan included many of the initiatives below. In 2005 and 2006, under the direction of the Curriculum Team Leaders and liaisons, teachers worked to update all Course Descriptions including prerequisites, alignment with state standards, technology, instruction and assessment as well as the Mission and Expectations. Documents were completed for every class offered at WHS.

The 2006 school year was just as productive as teachers again worked with the Curriculum Team Leaders and liaisons to complete curriculum maps based on the Heidi Hayes Jacobs model. Maps were completed for all active courses. As a follow up, the 2008-09 school year budget included funding to purchase the Curriculum Mapper Software that now moved mapping from simple Word documents to an online dynamic environment that teachers can use anytime. The software allows for alignment of standards and the ability to embed rubrics and assessments. Teachers also have the ability to examine specific data points within the curriculum with charts and quantifiable analyses related to individual or grouped State Standards.

In 2007, WHS was awarded \$2,500 when named a Compass School for dramatic improvement in MCAS. This award was used to fund a committee representing all academic areas that was charged with the creation of two school-wide rubrics, one for presentation and one for writing. The committee presented the rubrics during a faculty meeting and requested at least one trial of each rubric during the first quarter of the 2007-08 school year. Currently, the social studies department has elected to combine the A and B level courses for the 2009-2010 school year. The English department is currently involved in the discussion during department meetings. Between 2006 and 2008, pre- and post-testing was started with the mathematics and social studies departments. Each department was charged with designing a 25-30 question pre- and post- assessment for each quarter that is aligned with the State Standards. The data is scanned and results are charted. These graphs are tools that are used by teachers in specific courses to identify standards that may be troublesome for students, connections to the curriculum maps and instructional deficiencies between individual teachers. In fact, analyses of this data was a factor in making the decision regarding the combining of the A and B level courses in Social Studies.

WHS is an active member of the Wilmington Educational Foundation, which is a private group of business representatives that work to raise capital that is used to support teacher and school based initiatives. Teachers must write a grant proposal for innovative ideas for their classroom. As an example, some teachers have requested smart boards, digital projectors and digital cameras for use in their classes. Student employment opportunities are managed by the second assistant principal. Once every seven days during the double block, the School-to-Career class meets. Students in this class are taught to write resumes, cover letters and learn about skills related to employment. Each student is required to have a job for at least 20 hours per week. The assistant principal, with the assistance of a liaison hired by the superintendent, also

developed a Job Shadow Day. Students are matched with businesses in the community based on personal choices and interest. During 2007, a Career Fair was started at WHS. Over 50 individuals representing as many careers were assembled in the gymnasium. All students were able to attend the Fair and gather information related to careers in which they may have an interest.

Students are recognized in a variety of ways for their academic and extra-curricular accomplishments. Each month one student per department is selected as Student of the Month. Other standard recognitions include Honor and High Honor Roll which are printed in local newspapers. Each year in May, approximately 80 undergraduates are recognized at the Annual Awards Night. Students are presented with Excellence and Achievement Awards and a number of special awards including college book awards, collegiate medals and future scholarship opportunities. The Friday before graduation, select seniors attend the annual Scholarship Night. Representatives from more than 75 families and local businesses attend to present scholarships usually in excess of \$250,000. There are also special awards given by local politicians, military branches and for community service initiatives. The Principal's Cup is awarded annually to the class that has the least number of students who are tardy to school, the highest percentage of attendance, the most number of students with all A's, and the most spirited as voted by the faculty. Most mornings, the Spirit Flag is raised to recognize accomplishments of students or staff members. Spirit Flag recommendations can be made by anyone in the building who would like to recognize a special accomplishment. The principal's quarterly newsletter also highlights both students' and teachers' accomplishments and special achievements. Each year, the social studies department hosts a History Fair during which students display and demonstrate their "project".

Teachers and administrators volunteer to judge the students' work and prizes are awarded during the evening portion of this event after families and friends have been given the opportunity to view the different projects. In a similar fashion, the Foreign Language Club hosts a Culture Festival which is designed to showcase and celebrate the various cultures represented by the students and faculty at WHS. All are welcome to participate either by creating a display or by performing a dance, skit, etc. which demonstrates the elements of one's culture. Once again prizes are awarded following the performances. WHS also sponsors a chapter of the National Honor Society in which there are 33 members.

Seventy-one percent of students in both grades 11 and 12 took the SAT during the 2007-08 school year. The average SAT for the class of 2008 was 539 Math, 516 Critical Reading and 517 in Writing, slightly above state averages of 525 Math, 514 Critical Reading and 513 Writing. Sixty-five students also took the ACT, a new initiative of the guidance department designed to help students in the college admissions process. Currently, 7.2 percent of students take AP courses and are required to take the AP exams with 72 percent scoring 3 or better during the past two years. Since 2004, WHS teachers have worked to improve alignment to state standards. Student scores have been consistently on the rise. The percentage of students who scored Proficient or Advanced in Mathematics in 2005 was 87 percent compared to 90 percent for the 2008 exam. English also reflects tremendous increase from 79 percent in 2005 to 88 percent in 2008. As previously mentioned, WHS was presented the 2007 Compass Award by the Massachusetts Department of Education for improvement in MCAS scores.

School Improvement Planning

WHS continues the pursuit of excellence. A cohesive system for planning and improvement has been developed over the last four to five years. At the center of the plan is the District Strategic Plan that was developed by the 19 member voluntary Strategic Planning Committee made up of parents, teachers, administrators and community representatives. This committee compiled responses and results from four Focus Groups, which included school system staff members, parents, and elected and appointed municipal officials and employees, and one Community Forum. The responses identified six themes, Learning Results, Professional Development, Facilities, Community, Technology, and Communication, which were used to create a plan that is now the central force for planning around the District. At the high school level, the Mission Statement and Expectations for Student Learning drives decision-making in conjunction with the District Strategic Plan and the District Technology Plan. Each of these documents is referenced when making decisions that impact the high school.

During the 2005-2006 school year, the five-year plan was presented to the staff and faculty related to the principal's vision for WHS. Each of the items was culled from discussions with the Curriculum Team Leaders and liaisons as a starting point for continuous improvement. The five year plan was developed around the areas of curriculum, instruction and assessment. More recently, WHS has begun the process of redesigning the business department as outlined in the five-year plan. This redesign will include the addition of courses intended to assist in making connections for the Career Paths Model that will help students to make better decisions related to higher education. The next five year plan development will be the responsibility of the Curriculum Team Leaders, liaisons, and teachers to create based on their vision of WHS.

The WHS School Council is made up of parents, students, teachers and community members and is primarily responsible for the development of the annual School Improvement Plan as well as final approval of the Student-Parent Handbook and the Program of Studies. Each year, WHS is expected to present two or three goals to be met during the next school year to the School Committee. The WHS School Improvement Plan is developed with the Mission Statement and Academic Expectations in mind while staying within the five-year plan framework.

The most recent goals include developing course description documents and curriculum maps that have distinct connections to the Mission Statement and Expectations of WHS. Near the end of the 2007-08 school year, each department also discussed and decided upon primary and secondary responsibilities for each of the Expectations that will be published in the 2009-10 Program of Studies. A major related initiative included a community service requirement for all students beginning with the class of 2012.

Each year, the district provides a theme that helps schools to access new skills for their teachers, materials and, in some cases, hardware for their classes. The 2008-09 school year, the year of technology integration in the classroom, showcased Alan November as a district-wide speaker on technology integration in the classroom. On a day-long curriculum improvement opportunity in November '08, the "Wilmington University" format was used to offer over thirty individual workshops related to Technology including specific training and even places to try out new ideas for classrooms.

School's Statement of Mission and Expectations for Student Learning

WILMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

Wilmington High School will provide a student-centered education that promotes academic, personal, and social growth and achievement for all learners. Our school, with the support of the community, will ensure a learning environment that includes a challenging, quality standards-based curriculum, varied technological tools, current instructional materials and resources, up-to-date facilities and a safe and respectful environment. It is our goal that the students leave WHS with the appreciation for learning, and are capable of living and working in a global society.

(Adopted by the faculty 9/10/2007)

WHS Graduates will be:

Academic Expectations

Effective Communicators, who receive, interpret, and convey knowledge and ideas clearly and purposefully in a variety of modes.

Innovative Problem Solvers, who use inductive and deductive reasoning to address current and emerging issues, organize and analyze information, and pursue promising solutions with flexibility.

Self-Directed Learners, who understand themselves, make informed choices concerning their cognitive, physical, and emotional well-being; and monitor and accept responsibility for their continuous learning.

Social Expectations

Skilled Leaders, who use interpersonal and leadership skills to work effectively with peers and groups to accomplish common goals.

Cultured Individuals, who understand, appreciate and respond to the aesthetics of the arts, literature, and the natural world.

Civic Expectations

Community Contributors, who contribute actively to the good of their local and global environments.

COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS

FOR STUDENT LEARNING

CURRICULUM

INSTRUCTION

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT

LEARNING

1

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

The school's mission statement describes the essence of what the school as a community of learners is seeking to achieve. The expectations for student learning are based on and drawn from the school's mission statement. These expectations are the fundamental goals by which the school continually assesses the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Every component of the school community must focus on enabling all students to achieve the school's expectations for student learning.

1. The mission statement and expectations for student learning shall be developed by the school community and approved and supported by the professional staff, the school board, and any other school-wide governing organization.
2. The school's mission statement shall represent the school community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning.
3. The school shall define school-wide academic, civic, and social learning expectations that:
 - are measurable;
 - reflect the school's mission.
4. For each academic expectation in the mission the school shall have a targeted level of successful achievement identified in a rubric.
5. The school shall have indicators by which it assesses the school's progress in achieving school-wide civic and social expectations.
6. The mission statement and the school's expectations for student learning shall guide the procedures, policies, and decisions of the school and shall be evident in the culture of the school.
7. The school shall review regularly the mission statement and expectations for student learning using a variety of data to ensure that they reflect student needs, community expectations, the district mission, and state and national standards.

Conclusions

A revised mission and expectation statement was part of the school's five-year improvement plan. Wilmington High School's Mission Statement and Expectations for Student Learning were developed by all stakeholders within the school community. The documents were approved and supported by the staff, the school advisory council, and Wilmington School Committee. The documents were adopted in the fall of 2007. The school committee annually reviews and approves the mission and expectations for student learning. Copies of these guiding documents are posted in many areas in the school facility. Thus, the school community is focused on common goals and outcomes to improve student learning. (school committee, panel presentation, teacher, observations, self-study)

The school mission statement represents the school community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning. Wilmington High School focuses three academic expectations as the core of its fundamental values: effective communicators, innovative problem-solvers, and self-directed learners. Social expectations highlight that students will become skilled leaders and cultured individuals. The civic expectations state that students will become community contributors. The school committee, teachers, and students are able to articulate the mission statement and student learning expectations. These beliefs are evident in Wilmington High School's culture. Students reported that courses prepare them for college and that teachers encourage them to be self-guided. Students reported little-to-no bullying in school and felt it was easy to become involved in the school community. The students actively participated in community service projects such as collecting suitcases and coats for foster families and collecting donations for Haiti. A variety of rigorous courses is offered to students in order to provide them with a variety of experiences to demonstrate academic expectations. There are many opportunities for student involvement in extracurricular activities. According to the Endicott Study, 67 percent of parents believe that the mission statement embodies what the community values and believes about student learning. As a result of the school's commitment to the mission statement, students are challenged in academics and active within their school community. (students, teachers, panel presentation, self-study, Endicott Study)

Wilmington High School has defined school-wide academic, civic and social expectations. WHS graduates will be effective communicators, innovative problem-solvers, self-directed learners, skilled leaders, cultured individuals, and community contributors. Each expectation for student learning reflects the school's mission and has measurable indicators. A variety of student work samples references these expectations with an accompanying rubrics sheet. Teacher interviews reveal some disconnect from the mission's expectations as well as how the indicators were developed and implemented with all learners in mind. Additionally, the school is currently investigating how to report to all stakeholders how students are progressing in all expectations so this process that would show the value of mastering the expectations has not yet begun. Since implementation of each of the mission's expectations must begin immediately, a gap will continue to exist between what the school hopes a student will experience and actual achievement. (student work, teachers, self-study)

Wilmington High School must select a targeted level of successful achievement identified in a rubric for each academic expectation. Although the school has produced rubrics developed by

faculty members that are attached to some student work samples, no targeted level of achievement is indicated. The high school's leadership has acknowledged that this specification of an acceptable level of mastery is a critical need. In cooperation with the Curriculum Team Leaders and the faculty, the principal has worked for two years to draft rubrics that are acceptable to all and establish their use and target levels of achievement for the learning expectations. When Wilmington High School has established clear levels of success necessary for achieving its student expectations, students will be able to understand how they are progressing towards fulfilling this mission and how to do better. (school leaders, teachers, student work, self-study, mission standard committee)

Wilmington High School has indicators which assess the school's progress in achieving school-wide civic and social expectations but has not finalized their implementation. Academic departments across the school have taken ownership of all expectations including the civic and social expectations. Specific teachers can relate their curriculum, instruction, and assessment to these identified areas. Indicators were evident in student work samples. Some teachers recognize the connection of classroom activity to social and civic expectations through verbal prompts. The school is continuing to investigate mechanisms to report on all expectations, including the school's and students' progress in social and civic areas. Students will realize the full intent of the mission when Wilmington High School finalizes how to effectively assess and communicate student and school-wide progress on all expectations. (teachers, student work, classroom observations, self-study)

The mission statement and the school's expectations guide procedures, policies, and decisions at Wilmington High School. Student learning is guided by a strong sense of school pride. The school shows commitment to student community service through a new graduation requirement for the class of 2012. Students will be required to complete a specific number of community service hours in order to graduate. Each department is responsible for specific expectations, and teachers align their assignments and curriculum delivery with these primary and secondary goals. Assignments are created with the mission in mind, but the connection is not always explicit. Students, teachers, and administrators recognize that Wilmington High School is still working on fully implementing school-wide rubrics into daily practices. Most faculty members and students have a strong sense of school pride and the atmosphere of the school is positive, with mission principles already well-established in its culture. Most students feel supported in their task of developing into life-long learners who meet all the goals of the mission statement. The school's mission statement influences teacher instruction, but all of its goals are not yet fully implemented. The new community service requirement shows the school committee's dedication to the principles of the mission and providing non-academic, non-classroom opportunities for growth to all students. Since all stakeholders were included in the creation of the mission, these decisions are grounded and meaningful. (teachers, students, school leaders)

Wilmington currently has a plan to review the mission statement and expectations for student learning. A five-year plan has been created to evaluate and assess curriculum, instruction, and school needs. This plan ensures that the curriculum is aligned with the expectations, and departments are currently developing rubrics to assess achievement of expectations that are derived from the mission statement. The principal facilitates discussion with the curriculum team leaders regarding the achievement of the mission and rubrics use within departments.

However, the implementation of this process is not complete. The guidance department piloted a program utilizing portfolios to assess the civic and social expectations, but this process was not efficient and more work is being done. The mission statement is reviewed annually by principal, faculty, school advisory council, and school board. Future consistent focus on connecting school-wide and department rubrics to the mission statement and the implementation of the community service graduation requirement will ensure that students will meet the expectations. Wilmington High School has a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of its goals, but it is not yet using student assessment data to review its mission and expectations. Regular review will help the school hone its effectiveness in teaching and learning by following the highest principles of the school's mission. (school leaders, teachers, school board, self-study)

Commendations

1. The inclusion of community stakeholders in development of the mission statement and student learning expectations
2. School committee, teachers and students ability to articulate the mission statement and student learning expectations
3. The development of new graduation requirements for students based on the mission statement

Recommendations

1. Develop and implement a method to report to parents, students, and the community on how specific students and the school are progressing in each indicator
2. Establish and implement clear targeted levels of achievement for the rubrics that assess student achievement of the learning expectations
3. Develop and implement a plan to gather data through use of the school-wide rubrics to assess student mastery of school-wide expectations to drive any revisions of the mission statement and learning expectations and to inform improvements in curriculum and instruction

2

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

CURRICULUM

The curriculum, which includes coursework, co-curricular activities, and other school-approved educational experiences, is the school's formal plan to fulfill its mission statement and expectations for student learning. The curriculum links the school's beliefs, its expectations for student learning, and its instructional practices. The strength of that link is dependent upon the professional staff's commitment to and involvement in a comprehensive, ongoing review of the curriculum.

1. Each curriculum area shall identify those school-wide academic expectations for which it is responsible.
2. The curriculum shall be aligned with the school-wide academic expectations and shall ensure that all students have sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve each of those expectations.
3. The written curriculum shall:
 - prescribe content;
 - integrate relevant school-wide learning expectations;
 - identify course-specific learning goals;
 - suggest instructional strategies;
 - suggest assessment techniques including the use of school-wide rubrics.
4. The curriculum shall engage all students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking as well as provide opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills.
5. The curriculum shall:
 - be appropriately integrated;
 - emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage.
6. The school shall provide opportunities for all students to extend learning beyond the normal course offerings and the school campus.
7. There shall be effective curricular coordination and articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.
8. Instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, staffing levels, and the resources of the library/media center shall be sufficient to allow for the implementation of the curriculum.
9. The professional staff shall be actively involved in the ongoing development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum based on assessments of student performance in achieving the school's academic expectations and course-specific learning goals.
10. The school shall commit sufficient time, financial resources, and personnel to the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum.
11. Professional development activities shall support the development and implementation of the curriculum.

Conclusions

Each curriculum area at Wilmington High School has identified the school-wide expectations for which it is primarily responsible for, as well as an additional expectation that it will support. The program of studies describes courses and indicates the primary and supporting school-wide academic expectations. Additionally, student work samples indicate the primary and/or supporting expectations addressed by individual assignments. As a result, WHS teachers have provided multiple opportunities for students to meet school-wide expectations in each curriculum area. (teachers, student work, program of studies, curriculum guides, protocols for review and management)

The curriculum documents at Wilmington High School are aligned with the school-wide expectations and ensure that all students have sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve each of those expectations. Curriculum guides, teacher lesson plans, and student work suggest student learning activities that address or involve school-wide expectations. The curriculum guides, however, do not include indicators that assess student achievement of those expectations with school-wide rubrics. As a result, all students need opportunities in the written and delivered curricula to achieve school-wide expectations. (program of studies, curriculum guides, departmental level of responsibilities, teachers, student work, curriculum standards committee)

Some but not all written curricula of Wilmington High School prescribe content, integrate relevant school-wide learning expectations, include course-specific learning goals, suggest instructional strategies, and suggest assessment techniques. Curriculum guides and curriculum maps for several content areas delineate content and course-specific learning goals and identify course-specific, school-wide learning expectations. Some curriculum guides do not delineate varied instructional strategies. Other curriculum guides delineate identical instructional and assessment strategies for courses of different levels. In application, however, classroom observations and teacher interviews reveal that the actual learning experiences differ from the identical instructional strategies and assessment techniques outlined in the written curriculum. Additionally, nowhere does the written curriculum specify assessing student achievement of school-wide expectations using school-wide rubrics. As a result, the written curriculum of Wilmington High School prescribes and emphasizes content and coverage over varied learning experiences. Thus, the school must create and adopt a single complete curriculum format that is used by all content areas to ensure that all elements are provided for all levels of all courses. (curriculum guides, teachers, classroom observations)

The written curriculum engages all students in inquiry, problem-solving and higher order thinking, and provides opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills. According to the Endicott Survey, 84 percent of students and 85 percent of parents responding to the survey state that the teachers encourage them to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Teachers report in interviews, however, that inquiry, problem-solving, higher order thinking skills and authentic application take place more frequently in honors and advanced level courses than in basic level courses. Additionally, the Endicott Survey indicates that only 52 percent of students and 64 percent of parents feel that students apply what they have learned in class to real life situations outside of school. While written curricula prescribe identical instructional strategies and assessment techniques for all course levels, instructional

strategies and assessment techniques vary by level and in practice. For example, students shadowed in honors level courses frequently engage in inquiry by brainstorming, building their own meaning from content, and engaging in higher order thinking by creating an opinion and defending it with evidence. Classroom observations of basic level courses agree with teacher responses in interviews, indicating an emphasis on recall and identification, even though prescribed instruction and assessment are identical with more complex treatment in the written curriculum. All students are not engaged in inquiry, problem-solving, higher order thinking, or authentic application as a result of different learning experiences in classrooms despite common expectations in the curriculum resulting in inequity of opportunity for different students and revealing that the written curriculum is not an accurate record of what or how the students learn. Thus, more accurate curriculum documents and descriptions of the actual work and strategies used in the classroom enable all teachers to be consistent and make the curriculum effective as a source. (curriculum guides, teachers, classroom observations, student shadowing, Endicott Survey, students)

The curriculum guides do not reflect integration across disciplines and do not uniformly emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage. In the Wilmington High School Self-study, the school has identified interdisciplinary connections as a need, but the Endicott Survey indicated that 62 percent of students stated that teachers include topics from other subjects in their lessons. One course, *Facing History and Ourselves*, is a co-taught interdisciplinary course combining school-wide expectations from the social studies and English curricula. Other interdisciplinary integration does take place through circumstance: when an English course uses a novel that matches student experiences in a history course, for example. The intentional integration of disciplines is hindered by a lack of structured common planning time, the physical separation of the departments, and a lack of abundant instructional materials, specifically by limited printed resources. Interviews with the curriculum standards committee indicate faculty interest in making planned cross disciplinary connections and in the potential benefits to all student learning. Additionally, the superintendent of schools expressed the need for interdisciplinary integration. The Endicott Survey indicates that 75 percent of the staff stated that the curriculum in their department emphasizes depth of understanding over breadth of coverage, but only 66 percent of parents feels that their son or daughter has numerous opportunities to study topics in-depth. The written curriculum includes essential questions for each course, but classroom observations, student shadowing, and teacher interviews reveal that teachers emphasize coverage of topics either to maintain the intended pace of the curriculum or to address content measured by standardized testing, specifically the MCAS exam. There is, however, a variety of elective courses that do emphasize depth of understanding over coverage. Elective courses, suggested by students, faculty members, and parents, are designed and implemented by faculty members and administrators, and align with the Wilmington District's Protocol for Curriculum Revision and Management and state curriculum frameworks. Students are not given the structure to make intentional, meaningful connections across disciplines. Increased integration across disciplines will create additional depth to the learning experiences of Wilmington students. (self-study, curriculum guides, teachers, curriculum standard committee, protocol for curriculum revision and management)

Wilmington High School provides many opportunities for all students to extend learning beyond the normal course offerings and the school campus. The program of studies references a number of courses that students take to extend learning, including school-to-career, Distributive

Education Club of America (DECA), Virtual High School, field trips, and community service graduation requirements. Extracurricular opportunities include volunteering at the senior center, partnerships with local business, class organizations, the Ambassador Club, the Gay Straight Alliance, Rotary Club, National Honor Society, and Mock Trial. These represent a range of activities that cater to a diverse set of student interests and needs. Students generate some of these extracurricular opportunities based on interest. There is a robust athletic program at Wilmington High School, with fall, winter, and spring sports. Wilmington High School currently charges no participation fee for extra-curricular activities and athletics, making these opportunities equitably available to all students. As a result of the varied opportunities for learning beyond course offerings and the school campus, students can demonstrate and practice school-wide expectations in real world situations. (program of studies, student handbook, Endicott Survey, guidance, school leadership, students)

Wilmington High School does not effectively coordinate and articulate curriculum between all academic areas within the school but does effectively coordinate and articulate the curriculum within departments and with sending schools in the district. The curriculum at Wilmington High School does not integrate all academic areas with interdisciplinary connections or school-wide expectations. The Endicott Survey indicates that 78 percent of students believe they can use information from one class in other classes, and 52 percent of parents have seen evidence of interdisciplinary learning in their son or daughter's classes. Coordination among academic areas can be seen in the Computer Applications course training freshman students to properly use Microsoft Word to format and cite research, which aligns with the social studies requirements for the grade 10 research projects. Teachers report effective curriculum coordination and integration within academic departments and among sending schools. Responsibilities of the curriculum team leaders (CTL) were expanded in the 2006-2007 school year to include grades 6 through 12 in their staff evaluation and curriculum supervision responsibilities. The curriculum guides identify pre-requisites for courses, and the CTLs align curriculum from sending schools: the grades 6-8 math curriculum has been mapped for all levels and shared with the high school. In addition to the efforts of the CTLs, the assistant superintendent holds eight meetings of the secondary curriculum cabinet with middle and high school principals, the CTLs, and the fine and performing arts liaisons to discuss curriculum renewal. As a result of departmental and district-wide integration, students engage in a course of study that is matched with the middle school curriculum and are able to enroll in courses that best match student interests. When integration and articulation between academic areas occur, students are able to have meaningful opportunities to combine learning and knowledge and meet school-wide expectations. (curriculum guides, curriculum evidence binder, Endicott Survey, teachers, protocols for curriculum renewal and management, central office, self-study)

Wilmington High School has sufficient instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies and staffing levels to implement the curriculum, but there are insufficient facilities and insufficient resources in the library media center to implement the curriculum. Students and parents indicate that instructional materials such as textbooks are in adequate supply at Wilmington High School. Textbooks are updated according to the curriculum renewal process. While technology hardware and software has not been integrated into every classroom, technology in the form of SMARTBoards, digital projectors, mimeos, Geometer's Sketchpad, and PowerPoint are visible and regularly used to implement the curriculum in many classrooms. There are 3.1 students to every computer at Wilmington High School. Staffing levels

maintain a student to teacher ratio of 14:1, providing the opportunity for individual attention in delivery of the curriculum. All classrooms have adequate furniture and equipment to accommodate class sizes. The physical plant of Wilmington High School inhibits the full application of the curriculum. Science lab classrooms are outdated and insufficient in regard to physical space and equipment. Non-classroom space in the building is used in many cases for a purpose other than its designed intention, bathrooms used as storage areas for example, prohibiting the expansion or renovation of these spaces to accommodate curricular needs. The library media center does not have adequate resources to support the curriculum. The library has 24 desktop computers and 30 laptop computers, of which 24 are currently functional. It is difficult for two classes to use the library media center simultaneously since there is not adequate space to accommodate the classes. The library media center is open in the mornings before school on an informal basis, and a recent grant has provided funding for the library to be open after school three days a week. The print collection is not managed with a database, and the school library does not share resources with the town library. Instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, and staffing levels allow students to effectively engage in the learning prescribed by the curriculum. The limitations of the facilities prevent students from engaging in the full benefit of learning experiences prescribed by the curriculum, specifically in science labs. The library media center should serve as the intellectual hub of the school. Without sufficient resources to staff, supply, and modernize the library media center, students are not able to reliably engage as self-directed learners and in the school-wide expectations. (teachers, self-study, Endicott Survey, parents, observation, students)

Some, but not all, of the faculty engages in the ongoing development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum. Faculty members can report to the curriculum team leaders and administration regarding courses that need to be modified or offered. The district has protocols for curriculum renewal and management and a five-year curriculum renewal process. Additionally, the assistant superintendent meets eight times a year with middle and high school principals and faculty members. Key members of curriculum development and implementation -- specifically students, parents, and the library media specialist -- are not involved in the development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum. Additionally the professional staff does not develop, evaluate, or revise the curriculum based on assessments of student performance in achieving the school's academic expectations. The curriculum revision process is not based on student performance on school-wide expectations because there is no formal, consistent application of assessments to measure student performance in achieving the school's academic expectations. The professional staff does use student performance on course-specific goals as a basis for curriculum development, evaluation, and revision, and uses data to inform the curriculum revision process, such as MCAS data and pre- and post-testing in academic courses. As a result, curriculum development, evaluation, and revision take place without data on student performance on school-wide expectations and without input from key stakeholders. (self-study, protocol for Curriculum Renewal and Management, teachers, central office)

Wilmington High School commits sufficient time, financial resources, and personnel to the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum. The protocol for curriculum review and management creates a five-year curriculum development, evaluation, and revision plan. Curriculum at Wilmington High School is consistently mapped using curriculum mapping software. The central office funds the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum at Wilmington High School. Curriculum team leaders for each academic discipline, principals,

and the assistant superintendent inform the curriculum revision process both at the school and district level. There are 19 hours of curriculum improvement time and teachers meet with their curriculum team leaders six times per year. The math and social studies departments use student achievement on departmental pre and post tests to inform the curriculum review process. Wilmington has established sufficient organizational structures, time, and resources for the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum, allowing staff members to modify curriculum to match student needs. (protocols for curriculum review and management, teachers, curriculum guides, central office, curriculum standards committee)

Wilmington High School's professional development activities support the development and implementation of the curriculum. Teachers engage in professional development for personal growth and to support the curriculum. In addition to traditional on-site training and on-line courses offered by local colleges and universities, the Wilmington University initiative is a source of professional development. Wilmington University affords faculty members an opportunity not only to take courses but also to teach courses to their colleagues. Some courses are also initiated and offered to the faculty through Wilmington University by the district attorney's office, such as Alcohol and Kids, and Cyberbullying. Proposals are submitted or requested by faculty members. The assistant superintendent approves the course proposal or request. Teachers earn professional development points or district credit for teaching or attending Wilmington University courses. Teachers are offered PDPs for teaching courses. Substitute coverage for off-site participation is provided if needed. At this time, there is no formal plan to address how the content gained from professional development is or should be used in the classroom or incorporated formally into the curriculum. The principal identifies technology integration into the curriculum as having the biggest impact resulting from professional development opportunities. Professional development does support the development and implementation of curriculum. (WHS website, central office, teachers, school leadership, professional development handbook)

Commendations

1. Protocols for curriculum renewal and management
2. Role of curriculum team leaders in curriculum development, evaluation, revision, and alignment
3. The variety of opportunities for students to learn beyond the normal course offerings and school campus
4. Elective courses which emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage
5. The use of pre- and post-testing to inform the curriculum revision process

Recommendations

1. Ensure that all curriculum guides use a uniform curriculum format that suggests instructional strategies and identifies assessment techniques that use the school-wide rubrics
2. Ensure that the instructed curriculum engages all students in inquiry, problem-solving, higher order thinking skills, and authentic applications
3. Ensure that the documented curricula are consistently delivered
4. Integrate the curriculum across disciplines identifying interdisciplinary connections
5. Use data from assessments of student performance in achieving the school's academic expectations to inform curriculum development, evaluation, and revision

6. Include representatives from all stakeholders in the curriculum revision process

3

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

INSTRUCTION

The quality of instruction in a school is the single most important factor affecting the quality of student learning, the achievement of expectations for student learning, the delivery of the curriculum, and the assessment of student progress. Instructional practices must be grounded in the school's mission and expectations for student learning, supported by research in best practice, and refined and improved based on identified student needs. Teachers are expected to be reflective about their instructional strategies and to collaborate with their colleagues about instruction and student learning.

1. Instructional strategies shall be consistent with the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning.
2. Instructional strategies shall:
 - personalize instruction;
 - make connections across disciplines;
 - engage students as active learners;
 - engage students as self-directed learners;
 - involve all students in higher order thinking to promote depth of understanding;
 - provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge or skills;
 - promote student self-assessment and self-reflection.
3. Teachers shall use feedback from a variety of sources including other teachers, students, supervisors, and parents as a means of improving instruction.
4. Teachers shall be expert in their content area, knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches, and reflective about their own practices.
5. Discussion of instructional strategies shall be a significant part of the professional culture of the school.
6. Technology shall be integrated into and supportive of teaching and learning.
7. The school's professional development program shall be guided by identified instructional needs and shall provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies.
8. Teacher supervision and evaluation processes shall be used to improve instruction for the purposes of enhancing student learning and meeting student needs.

Conclusions

Although Wilmington High School has instructional strategies in some academic areas that are aligned with the mission statement, they are not consistently articulated through lessons or assignments nor specifically listed in the curriculum documents. When a connection is made, it is not necessarily deliberate. Only 58 percent of teachers says, “the school’s mission statement influences my repertoire of teaching methods”. Teachers give examples of the strategies that seem aligned with the mission statement, but they are not always able to make the connection without referencing notes or the mission statement. Some teachers present lessons that connect with the mission statement, but there is no formal reference for the students. Students describe a recent push toward understanding and incorporating the school’s mission in their lessons. New teachers are required by their curriculum team leaders to tie weekly lesson objectives to the mission statement. Since there is no emphatic tie between instruction and the mission statement, students are not able to recognize the connection between school goals and their class work. (Endicott Study, teachers, students, observation, teacher contract)

Effective instructional strategies vary at Wilmington High School. The majority of teachers frequently personalizes instruction. Teachers from different disciplines utilize a variety of personalized instructional strategies. A math teacher is interactive with her students during the warm-up and homework review. A history teacher shared how she not only develops class lessons for students with individualized education programs, but met with guidance counselors to make sure their needs are met. She also meets with special education staff to ensure her methods are best for each student’s individual learning styles. Teachers report personalizing instruction in different ways according to their content area. English teachers state that they give timely and specific feedback to students on written assignments while math teachers vary their instruction during class time. Some instructors do not fully utilize opportunities for personalization; there was a math class in which a paraprofessional was not engaged during any part of the class instruction time, even when it could be seen that all students were not learning. For the most part, teachers find a variety of ways to personalize instruction to support student learning.

Formal connections across disciplines are not deliberate. Teachers who know they are teaching a similar time period or topic as another department may not frequently draw this connection for their students as a result of departmental isolation or insufficient curricular integration. A math teacher explained how she used scientific formulas and radicals in a math unit that was being taught during the same time a science teacher was covering similar topics, but the teacher commented that she did not specifically communicate the connection between the curriculum areas to her students. Additionally, an English teacher showed how his unit on *The Great Gatsby* was taught during the same time as World War I History lessons. He commented that the knowledge the students gained in history helped them better understand that novel, but there were no shared assessments or expectations between teachers for the unit. Apparently students informed teachers of these connections. Teachers do not formally co-operate to become aware of this alignment or create it. Many teachers expressed the desire to work with teachers in other disciplines but commented on the limited opportunities during the school day for collaboration. Although there is evidence that curriculum documents are aligned appropriately, opportunity is not provided to have the connections impact instruction purposefully.

Limited instructional time is given to active learning in most classrooms, but many students are engaged in material and lessons across the school. Although 97 percent of teachers report that their classes engage students actively and are student-centered, only 50 percent of classroom lessons observed demonstrate a type of active learning. In a Spanish class, the teacher reviewed different verb forms and continued review by having students work on an activity that allowed them to work with different classmates and put the verbs into practice. Meetings with students revealed that although they knew teachers had intentions of engaging them, this kind of lesson was not consistent. Insufficient instructional approaches limit students' active participation.

Many efforts have been made, however, in all disciplines to allow students to direct their own learning. Teachers encourage students to choose different ways to demonstrate what they have learned. Most teachers provide different approaches for students to explore content and develop projects individual to their needs and interests. In English, history, and foreign language, teachers allow students to choose the kind of presentation they give for certain assignments. Students may use PowerPoint presentations, oral class lessons, or poster board presentations to share material with classmates. In social studies, grade 11 students are expected to lead a class conversation for one full period and are given a wide variety of topics for the student leader to form a basis for their discussion. Students are given many opportunities to be self-directed learners, enriching their educational experience.

As well, students use higher order thinking in most classes to aid in comprehension and enhance their depth of understanding. In a French class, students were given an assignment related to real life examples. Students presented projects showing how they not only learned about the topic but related it to their own lives. Then, students made informed decisions about their future desires to incorporate the topic into their lives. The social studies department discussed a unit about the Treaty of Versailles. The students learned about the treaty from a historical point of view, then they wrote a descriptive essay about what they would feel if they lived during this time period and discussed how they would have done things differently that may have ultimately affected the outcome of the treaty. When Wilmington students are given higher order thinking assignments, their depth of understanding in the content area improves.

There are varied opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills in some areas. There were examples in multiple math courses of real life application of skills. In the Financial Literacy class, students learn formulas for budgets, read apartment listings, learn how to do their taxes, and talk about balancing a budget. When balancing budgets, students are able to decide necessities versus wants and see how their salary must be allotted to accommodate both. Additionally, students in history classes are exposed to primary sources such as genocide speakers, allowing them to connect what they learn in class to real life examples. In Computer-Aided Design (CAD) classes, students designed their own houses and hotel rooms. They used all steps from building design to floor plans and elevations, translating into a final product demonstrated in three dimensions. Finally, in an Aquaculture class, students were able to problem-solve while caring for tanks of fish. They had to understand the complexities of the task at hand and were able to adapt to problems accordingly. Students are given many opportunities to apply knowledge which enhances their understanding of material.

Students are infrequently given time to self-assess and reflect, however. Students reported having time to assess performance on assignments, but there was no connection made between

assessment and the teacher's grade report. End of the year surveys seem to focus on future planning as opposed to self-assessment and instruction. Teachers did not report any specific ways in which they use this data to change or adapt instruction. There were good examples of clicker technology anonymously aiding students in expressing their level of comprehension in a non-threatening way and allowing the teacher to have immediate feedback. In contrast, in some classes, students were observed not asking the teacher for help when they clearly did not understand a concept. Students do self-assess as part of several classes but infrequently. Since there is no concrete evidence that student self-assessments impact student learning at Wilmington High School, results are not being used to inform or influence instruction. Thus, effective instructional strategies vary at Wilmington High School and the quality of student learning fluctuates as well. (students, shadowing, teachers, observation, standards committee, Endicott Study)

Although teachers receive feedback from different sources, including students, these reflections or evaluations do not always improve or impact their instruction. Teachers individually review student exit surveys. The principal emphasizes instruction during contractual evaluations. The first 15 minutes of faculty time is devoted to individual departments introducing a new instructional practice to teaching peers. These local demonstrations are a springboard for discussion and feedback within departments. In most departments, teachers talk with their colleagues about what strategies are successful in the classroom and use the ideas of their peers to adapt and change lesson plans. Common planning time is not given for this feedback, but teachers say they look for informal time each day to check in with other members of departments to gauge how effective lesson techniques may be. The English department has set aside time twice per month to meet as a department and talk about best practices. The Endicott Survey results suggested that over 80 percent of teachers found that supervisor feedback played an important role in improving instruction. As a result of teacher's feedback from co-workers and students, there are also opportunities for improvement. This feedback, however, seems to have little notable impact on instruction. When feedback is given from multiple sources, opportunities arise for instructional improvement. Thus, Wilmington High School should look for formal mechanisms that document the connection between feedback and instructional improvement. (teachers, students, panel presentation, school leaders, Endicott Survey)

Teachers are knowledgeable in their content areas and reflective in their instructional approaches. One hundred percent of teachers is rated as highly qualified according to the department of elementary and secondary education. The Endicott Study is not equally supportive as information gathered in classroom observations and teacher interviews: 86 percent of people on the board stated they are satisfied with teacher expertise while only 74 percent of parents felt confident in the teacher's ability to teach their student, but many student interviews alluded to their satisfaction with their teacher quality. Time is not given in the schedule for teachers to develop instructional approaches, but most department members converse on a daily basis about how to enhance instruction. Teachers have expertise in their content area and a desire to improve their instructional practices that enhance student learning. (Endicott Study, teachers, students, DESE website)

Wilmington High School teachers have little time built into their schedules to discuss instructional strategies. Although teachers seem to desire time to work with colleagues on the improvement of student achievement, there is currently no additional time beyond department

meetings and professional development days. There is clear evidence of meeting time and a half-day professional development in agendas located in the “meeting notes” binder. However, the current Wilmington Teacher’s Association contract documents only curriculum improvement meetings. Of the ten curriculum team leader (CTL) meetings, four are designated for curriculum improvement while none are designated for instruction. Teachers have little opportunity for interdepartmental planning time although attempts have been made by administrators to provide common planning time for teachers. Since discussion of instructional strategies takes place only informally, teachers are not given enough opportunities to improve. Thus, the school should provide collegial meeting time and a protocol for discussion for student work and best practices. (teachers, teacher contract, meeting notes binder, panel presentation)

There is a clear attempt at Wilmington High School to increase technology in instructional practices. There is a need for classes to have access to a class set of computers. Very little time is available for classes to use computer labs. Students want to utilize more technology in their lessons. Using clicker technology in classrooms seemed extremely helpful to students during the learning process although they report that this technology is available only in certain classrooms. All students report having had access to the mobile lap top cart in English, but the use of computers for assignments was reported as sporadic and dependent upon instructors. Teachers were seen using SMARTBoard and MIMIO technology to enhance lessons. Many teachers’ ideas about the use and availability of technology were concurrent with student suggestions. The technology coordinator commented that the district made technology a professional development priority during the past two school years and teachers supported this claim. Although technology is not used as often as desired, there is clear evidence that teachers are making strides in consistently incorporating appropriate technology into each lesson to help students understand material. (teachers, students, district administrators)

Wilmington High school’s professional development program is guided by identified instructional needs and provides opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies. Professional development days are dedicated to technology development and differentiated instruction workshops as well as inter-departmental lesson development and best practices. Curriculum documents provided by the district show autonomy for buildings in providing professional development associated with school improvement plans. Teachers state that the different yearly professional development initiatives are clear to them and that professional development days align closely with these goals. The principal also described how opening day professional development often includes a well known keynote speaker who speaks on a topic that correlates with the improvement goal. The professional development is guided and aligned with the needs of the school. This allows for initiatives like technology to become more prevalent in the school, thereby providing multiple strategies for instruction, communication, and assessment. (curriculum documents, teachers, school leadership)

Processes for formal teacher supervision and evaluation at Wilmington High School are used to improve instruction for the purposes of enhancing student learning and meeting student needs. There is a recent shift toward evaluation systems to help improve instruction. Administrators report having a better opportunity to discuss instructional practices with other teachers as a result of the new evaluation tool in which teachers have pre- and post- conferences with their evaluators. There is also a bi-yearly opportunity for professional status teachers to create

individual professional growth plans as part of the evaluation process. CTLs provide supportive feedback through their evaluation of teachers. Teachers who were interviewed appreciate the opportunity to discuss instructional strategies as opposed to the previous process which was a document checklist. The union contract was recently ratified to support the change that includes pre- and post- conferences for formal evaluations of teachers. Teachers and administrators have made great strides in improving the teacher evaluation system. They are still working on finding ways to hone the system so that it highly benefits instruction and has a positive impact on student learning and their needs. (school leadership, central office personnel, teachers, teacher contract)

Commendations

1. Variety of teacher strategies to support personalized student learning
2. Teachers' desire to improve instructional practices
3. The revised evaluation tool that better informs and impacts instruction
4. Continuing improvement of technology use

Recommendations

1. Develop and implement a process to allow teachers to meet regularly both by department and in inter-disciplinary groups for the purpose of improving instructional practices and analyzing assessment data
2. Align classroom instruction with the mission and learning expectations
3. Continue to work on integration of additional and appropriate technology into classrooms
4. Create more access to computer labs for whole classes to maximize teaching and learning
5. Provide professional development in strategies that personalize and support engaged, active learning

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

4

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Its purpose is to inform students regarding their learning progress and teachers regarding ways to adjust the curriculum and instruction to respond effectively to the learning needs of students. Further, it communicates to the school community the progress of students in achieving the school's expectations for student learning and course-specific learning goals. Assessment results must be continually discussed to improve curriculum and instruction.

1. The school shall have a process to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations in the mission based on school-wide rubrics.
2. The school's professional staff shall use data to assess the success of the school in achieving its civic and social expectations.
3. For each learning activity teachers shall clarify to students the relevant school-wide academic expectations and course-specific learning goals that will be assessed.
4. Teachers shall base classroom assessment of student learning on school-wide and course-specific rubrics.
5. Teachers shall use varied assessment strategies to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies and to assess student growth over time.
6. Teachers shall meet collaboratively to discuss and share student work and the results of student assessments for the purposes of revising the curriculum and improving instructional strategies.
7. The school's professional development program shall provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies.
8. The school's professional staff shall communicate:
 - individual student progress in achieving school-wide academic expectations to students and their families;
 - the school's progress achieving all school-wide expectations to the school community.

Conclusions

Wilmington High School's process to assess school-wide and individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations in the mission based on school-wide rubrics is in the early stages of development. Expectations for student learning are mission-based, clearly stated, and displayed throughout the school. Departments have taken primary and secondary responsibility for specific academic expectations. As shown in the department levels of responsibility document and through teacher interviews, the primary and secondary responsibilities are at the course level. The professional staff has developed rubrics for each learning expectation for use in reporting systems such as report cards and transcripts. Teachers and the assessment subcommittee did not refer to these school-wide rubrics, however, when asked about how course-specific expectations contributed to assessment of school-wide learning expectations. Cover sheets on sample student work indicate that teachers are assessing individual students with regard to the academic expectations, but it is not clear how these individual recordings are used or reported to assess student or school-wide progress. The recordings are not collected, tracked, aggregated, or reported on. The professional staff has developed two school-wide rubrics for use in all classrooms to aid the assessment of progress in achieving the "Effective Communicator" expectation. One is a presentation rubric, and the other is a writing rubric. Although the self-study states that "every department" uses these rubrics, teacher interviews illustrated that use is not common across departments or among teachers within departments. In some cases, teachers were unaware of the existence of school-wide rubrics or confused them with the cover sheet attached to samples of student work. Students also reported that the use of school-wide rubrics is inconsistent. Most students have encountered the writing rubric while fewer students had experienced being assessed with the presentation rubric. Inconsistent implementation of existing school-wide rubrics and the lack of a complete system of school-wide rubrics to assess the remaining academic expectations (innovative problem-solver and self-directed learner) hinder the uniform and equitable assessment of student and school-wide progress. Thus, school-wide focus and, if necessary, professional development in the use and interpretation of rubrics may be necessary to promote consistent, effective assessment of student achievement and generate useful data to use to improve teaching and learning. (self-study, students, teachers, student work, assessment standard committee, school leadership)

Wilmington High School's professional staff lacks data to assess the success of the school in achieving its civic and social expectations. The self-study reports that a variety of extracurricular activities affords students opportunities to meet the social and civic expectations. Data, however, is not available to measure the success and outcome of involvement in extracurricular activities and in meeting social and civic expectations. Teachers report that students do, in fact, learn how to become skilled leaders, cultured individuals, and community contributors through their experience in extracurricular activities, yet there is no formal process to collect data. Classroom observations and sample lessons indicate that students are offered opportunities to acquire, practice, and extend their skills as leaders, community contributors, and cultured individuals in the classroom, but again, there is no formal process to record, track, or report on these opportunities and their outcomes. A new community service requirement has been put in place to ensure that students meet civic expectations by developing as community contributors. The requirement is documented in the school handbook. There is a log sheet to record and track community service activities, with

each student completing a personalized 50-hour volunteer commitment in order to graduate. Also, recent graduates return to WHS to share with juniors, seniors, and faculty members their college experiences and tell how well WHS prepared them for entering the post-high school world. There is no data to support these anecdotes, however. Without data it is impossible to assess the success of the school in achieving its civic and social expectations. Thus, it is necessary to create indicators in order to record and evaluate results. (self-study, students, observation, teachers, student handbook, community service log sheet)

Most teachers do not clarify to students the relevant school-wide academic expectations. Most teachers clarify the course-specific learning goals that will be assessed. Students report that detailed course syllabi are distributed at the beginning of each course, most of which highlight school-wide and course-specific expectations. Classroom observations and student shadowing show that students are aware of what course-specific learning goals will be assessed. School-wide academic expectations were communicated inconsistently, however, and often without explanation. Math teachers were observed to identify the relevant school-wide academic expectations on written summative assessments, and one student reported that a recent math test had a question where he was asked to explain how he used his skills as an “innovative problem-solver” to solve a problem. Neither reference was accompanied by a clarification of the expectation. Student assignments are varied and accompanied by rubrics specific to the course or assignment. There is clear communication of expectations and course-specific learning goals across departments. Until students see the connection between course specific and school-wide academic expectations, there will not be a shared experience for all students. Thus, it will be necessary for the school to mandate a formal connection of class work with expectations. (teachers, observations, student work)

Teachers routinely base classroom assessment of student learning on course-specific rubrics for written assignments, projects, and student-led discussions. These rubrics appear to be loosely aligned with school-wide learning expectations and existing school-wide rubrics. The social studies rubric for student-led discussions clearly identifies student expectations that reflect elements of the school-wide learning expectations. Similarly, the six-point writing rubric used in some departments also shares elements with the school-wide presentation and writing rubrics. The school-wide writing and presentation rubrics are utilized in some courses. Some science assessments were based on these two rubrics, though more detailed course-specific rubrics were also used. While course-specific rubrics are used for a variety of assessments, the use of the school-wide rubrics is not clearly explained in most classes, and some teachers are unaware of or misidentify these existing school-wide rubrics. A few students were able to connect the school-wide learning expectations with their classroom assignments and activities. Students must be aware of how they are being assessed with regard to the academic course requirements or they will not be able to make connections to the school-wide learning expectations. (teachers, observation, Endicott Survey)

Teachers at Wilmington High School use varied assessments to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies and to assess student growth over time. Some departments employ pre- and post- test assessments to measure student growth over a period time. For example, in the social studies department, students are pre-tested at the beginning of each quarter and complete a post-test at the end of the quarter. The math department uses pre- and post-assessments to measure student growth and inform their instruction. Professional staff

members in the science and social studies departments provided varied student assessments such as physical models, journals, brochures, mock congressional hearings, student-directed discussions, lab reports, case studies, paper and pencil quizzes, and written assessments. These assignments had clear expectations which required students to demonstrate higher order thinking skills and in-depth analyses of content. Formative assessment also takes place in the classroom on a regular basis. Students are assessed in many ways and provided with opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge using a variety of media and strategies so that all learning styles are accommodated. (teachers, student work, self-study, observations)

Few formal opportunities exist for teachers to meet collaboratively to discuss and share student work and the results of student assessments for the purposes of revising the curriculum and improving instructional strategies. The majority of collaboration takes place on an informal basis because there is no consistent, formal meeting time in the school schedule for teachers to meet with one another. Time is utilized during department meetings and half-days to share student work and analyze student assessment results. In math and social studies departments, a pre- and post-test are given during different quarters to assess student knowledge and growth. Analysis of student performance on such tests has resulted in curriculum and instructional changes (i.e. removing a level in social studies courses, and restructuring the time necessary to cover specific mathematic concepts). Representatives from the departments reported using department time to analyze MCAS results. The creation of a school data team now aids this process, allowing teachers to focus more time on using the data analysis results to review and revise curriculum and instructional practices. Common planning time within the school schedule could create additional collaboration among colleagues among colleagues to improve instructional strategies and curriculum and strengthen student achievement. (teachers, curriculum team leaders, assessment standard committee, department meeting agendas)

Wilmington High School's professional development program provides a few opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies. As the school is a member of different educational collaboratives, including the Collaborative Project for Math and Science Integrated Education and the Northeast Consortium, professional development opportunities are available for teachers. Teachers comment, however, that few professional development opportunities focus on the topic of student assessment strategies, including the course offerings through Wilmington University. When teacher initiative is taken, professional development opportunities addressing the development and analysis of student assessments are possible. For example, as stated in the self-study, the social studies department developed a program to review and revise student assessments. Wilmington University has offered courses in the past that train teachers on a clicker system. This technology can be used in classrooms to increase formative assessment, though the focus in the professional development is on technology training. The majority of professional development offerings focus on content- specific material and technology training. Since there are not many offerings on a broad range of student assessment strategies, teachers do not have data on how to adjust the curriculum and instruction to respond effectively to the learning needs of all students. (assessment standard committee, self-study, Wilmington High School professional development offerings, central office)

Wilmington High School's professional staff does not communicate individual student progress in achieving school-wide academic expectations to students and their families, nor does

Wilmington High School's professional staff communicate the school's progress in achieving all school-wide expectations to the school community. Students and their families are informed of student progress in achieving course learning objectives eight times a school year in formal reports. Four of these instances involve interim reports with teacher comments, while the other four are quarterly report cards with grades and comments. Additionally, students in their junior year meet with guidance counselors to discuss their grade point average and class rank in regard to their post-graduation plans. These practices do not communicate students' progress in achieving school-wide academic expectations. There are several means of communication to inform the school community of school events and occurrences but not school-wide progress in achieving school-wide expectations. Traditions such as the Principal's Cup and naming students of the month highlight the progress of certain cohorts of students within the school community. These venues, however, do not include the communication of school progress in achieving school-wide expectations. Although the school profile does report SAT scores and post-graduation plans, this profile is primarily distributed to colleges. When members of a school community are unaware of individual and school-wide progress in achieving the academic and school-wide expectations, they will not be able to make informed decisions with regard to their learning and/or financial, social, and civic support of the school. (parents, teachers, students, self-study, assessment standard committee, guidance, Wilmington High School profile)

Commendations

1. The school-wide rubrics for writing and presentations which assess the school-wide learning expectation of creating effective communicators
2. The varied assessment strategies used to determine student success and progress
3. The development, review, revision, and implementation of course-specific rubrics
4. The initiatives taken by faculty members to meet and discuss student progress, instructional strategies, curriculum development, and student assessments

Recommendations

1. Develop and implement processes to assess and communicate student and school-wide progress in achieving the school-wide academic, civic and social expectations
2. Add a rating assessment of student progress for each of the six school-wide learning expectations to the report card form
3. Offer and evaluate more professional development opportunities specific to a variety of assessment strategies and supervise their implementation
4. Develop and implement common planning time for members of a department to work collaboratively to review assessment results and share of assessment strategies

**COMMISSION ON
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS
SUPPORT STANDARDS**

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

SUPPORT STANDARD

5

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

The way in which a school organizes learning for students, fosters leadership, and engages its members has a profound effect on teaching and learning. The professional culture of the school must be characterized by thoughtful, reflective, and constructive discourse about decision-making and practices which supports student learning and well-being.

1. The school board and superintendent shall ensure that the principal has sufficient autonomy and decision-making authority to lead the school in achieving the mission and expectations for student learning.
2. The principal shall provide leadership in the school community by creating and maintaining a shared vision, direction, and focus for student learning.
3. Teachers as well as administrators other than the principal shall provide leadership essential to the improvement of the school.
4. The organization of the school and its educational programs shall promote the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
5. Student grouping patterns shall reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, reflect current research and best practices, and support the achievement of the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
6. The schedule shall be driven by the school's mission and expectations for student learning and shall support the effective implementation of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
7. Meaningful roles in the decision-making process shall be accorded to students, parents, and all members of the school staff to promote an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership.
8. Each teacher shall have a student load that enables the teacher to meet the learning needs of individual students.
9. There shall be a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult member of the school community in addition to the school guidance counselor who personalizes each student's educational experience, knows the student well, and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning.
10. The professional staff shall collaborate within and across departments in support of learning for all students.
11. All school staff shall be involved in promoting the well-being and learning of students.
12. Student success shall be regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed.
13. The climate of the school shall be safe, positive, respectful, and supportive, resulting in a sense of pride and ownership.
14. The school board shall support the implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning.

Conclusions

The principal enjoys sufficient autonomy and decision-making authority necessary to lead Wilmington High School in achieving its mission and expectations for student learning. The principal has implemented a five-year plan that was supported by the superintendent and school board and received financial support. The principal has the autonomy to select personnel to hire. The financial support has provided funds for the purchase of Curriculum Mapper, joining the Virtual High School collaborative, and differentiated instruction workshops. As noted in the self-study, the principal's job description clearly delineates the autonomy of his position. With this autonomy and decision-making authority, he has successfully led Wilmington High School in achieving the mission and student expectations for learning. (self-study, teachers, school committee, central office personnel, school leaders)

The principal actively provides leadership in the school community by creating and maintaining a shared vision, direction, and focus for student learning. The principal's five-year plan was clearly communicated and successfully implemented. Both parents and students applaud the principal for his visibility in and around the school community. The principal not only develops the vision, but he is an active participant in the execution of his five-year plan, including developing curriculum and instituting technology improvements. The principal's differentiated instruction workshops highlighted his ability to model good teaching and willingness to take a lead role in the implementation of his initiatives. Teachers described observations and evaluations as both supportive and aligned with the school's mission and learning expectations. A clear vision and focus for student learning contribute greatly to the principal's strong and positive leadership. (self-study, teachers, department leaders, school leaders, parents, shadowing)

Curriculum team leaders (CTLs) and district liaisons as well as club advisors and coaches provide essential leadership towards the improvement of Wilmington High School. The administrators' emphasis on open dialogue encourages teachers to submit suggestions for school improvement initiatives. Teachers feel comfortable providing input and suggestions for school improvement through their CTLs. CTLs effectively communicate teacher concerns and collaboratively work with the CTL team and school administrators to improve learning expectations. Furthermore, district liaisons incorporate what they know of teacher needs and data from student achievement in aligning K-12 curriculum. Teachers feel empowered by their participation on various committees focusing on the attendance policy and student plagiarism as well as the establishment of school-wide rubrics for writing and oral presentation. Teachers are encouraged to share best practices and support professional development through the Wilmington University, a source of pride within the school community. Teachers and administrators work with a collaborative effort resulting in school improvement. (teachers, department leaders, school leaders, parents, school committee)

The current educational programs and leadership structure adequately promote Wilmington High School's mission and expectations for student learning. The school-wide writing and presentation rubrics are evidence of an interdisciplinary commitment to the expectations. The recent addition of the 50-hour community service graduation requirement and increased mathematics graduation requirement confirms the school's adherence to the mission statement. The addition of Virtual High School collaboration, along with several other electives, promotes

additional and extended opportunities for student learning. The school's organization supports the needs of the music students as well as providing a sustained long block for diversified learning opportunities. One organizational concern hindering student learning is the inconsistent adherence to and enforcement of the two-minute passing time. Students are offered a variety of educational programs that promote the school's mission and expectations, but the lack of adherence to the passing time rule delays classes and negatively impacts student learning. (school leaders, teachers, shadowing, department leaders)

Aside from elective courses, Wilmington High School schedules its students based on student achievement in prerequisite courses, not taking advantage of the benefits of heterogeneous grouping. Wilmington High School currently groups students in core areas on four academic levels. The social studies department has taken initial steps toward heterogeneous classes by combining Level A and Level B students. The mathematics and English departments have started discussions of the benefits of eliminating Level B courses, thereby taking positive steps towards heterogeneous courses. Advanced placement classes are offered to students only after an individual interview and approval by CTLs, thereby limiting the options for all students to enroll in advanced placement courses. Current research supporting the educational benefits of heterogeneous courses and least restrictive environments is not being implemented in the scheduling and student grouping at Wilmington High School, thereby limiting the potential of some students. (shadowing, teachers, department leaders, school leaders)

While the scheduling model contains many positive attributes, there is no formal common planning time. The double block provides teachers an opportunity to offer authentic assessments and a variety of student learning experiences including laboratory investigations and cooperative learning strategies. The schedule provides adequate flexibility to support the needs of various students and departments, such as the music and school-to-career programs. The lack of common planning time, however, prevents content area teachers from collaborating and furthering student learning expectation initiatives. The two-minute passing time between classes is unrealistic and unenforceable. The current scheduling model does not allow teachers to collaborate effectively, potentially limiting student learning. (teachers, department leaders, school leaders)

Students, parents, and members of the Wilmington High School staff play an active role in decision-making process that promotes participation, responsibility, and ownership. Wilmington High School's student council consists of peer-elected representatives who provide a student perspective in the decision-making process. The Ambassador Program consists of students who have actively identified school concerns and provide feedback and suggestions for improvement initiatives. Most recently, the ambassador program has focused attention on the two-minute passing time expectation. The parent advisory council (PAC) has provided valuable feedback from the Wilmington parent community. Some PAC involvement includes assistance on interview teams for hiring, appropriateness of summer honors coursework, and the current discussion of the effectiveness of mid-term exams. The school council, consisting of students, parents, teachers, and community members, has a direct role in approving the student handbook and relevant policies. The input and decision-making roles of students, parents, and faculty members is valued by school administrators and supports an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership within all the constituency groups. (self-study, school leaders, parents, teachers)

The student load at Wilmington High School is appropriate for meeting the needs of individual students. The average class size is 21, while the student to teacher ratio is 14:1. There has been a commitment from the community, school board, and superintendent to maintain current staffing levels, allowing Wilmington High School to meet the academic expectations of all students. The course selection process is student-driven, allowing the student population to select the courses that meet their interests and needs. Students enjoy appropriate class sizes that afford them the opportunities to meet personalized needs and student learning expectations. (self-study, students, school leaders, school committee, central office)

There is no formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult member of the community who personalizes each student's educational experience. Although there is a great effort among the faculty members to personalize the educational experience for all students, there is no formal program in place. Parents commend the efforts of the guidance department to support the needs of all students but some believe the counselors are overwhelmed by their caseload size. Students interviewed mention constructive connections to classroom teachers, coaches, and advisors but confirm they are not formally assigned to a member of the Wilmington High School staff. Both teachers and parents note the concern for students who do not stand out either as highly academically achieving or in need of support services. The school needs a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult member of the school community besides the school guidance counselor to support each student's educational experience. (self-study, parents, students, teachers)

There is no structure in place for Wilmington High School faculty members to collaborate within and across departments within the formal school day in support of student learning expectations. Academic departments meet regularly in addition to extended curriculum improvement time days to discuss standards, grading policies, common assessments, instructional practices, and curriculum revision. The development of the mission statement and school-wide writing and presentation rubrics are examples of successful interdisciplinary collaboration. There has been support by both the Wilmington High School administration and the superintendent for the development of interdisciplinary courses, resulting in the creation of the first interdisciplinary course implemented in the 2008-2009 school year. Wilmington University offers a breadth of professional development opportunities. Additional time is needed for wider collaboration among teachers, however. The establishment of formal school-wide collaboration time and protocol would provide the professional staff with more reflection and discussion of curriculum, instruction and assessment, potentially improving teaching and all students' educational journeys at Wilmington. (self-study, district leadership, teachers, school leadership)

Wilmington High School teachers and support staff generally promote the well-being and learning of all students. The guidance staff was recently increased from three to five counselors, enabling a smaller caseload and more personal interactions with students. The athletic director conducts three meetings with seasonal athletes, coaches, and parents to establish positive connections among the constituents. Many teachers take an active role through advising clubs and activities. The students' well-being and learning are genuinely supported by the entire staff of Wilmington High School, creating the potential for a positive school experience for all students. (self-study, school leadership, teachers, students)

Student success is enthusiastically acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed. A student of the month is selected by each department, and the student's photo is prominently displayed in the main foyer. The art department creatively displays various students' work in the school. The spirit flag is raised and announcement made in celebration of student accomplishments. The Principal's Cup is awarded in recognition of the class with the least number of tardies, highest attendance rate, most As, and faculty input to recognize class spirit. Wilmington High School conducts annual award ceremonies celebrating academic and athletic achievement. The Paul Revere Bowl is given each spring to a deserving senior who represents the essence of Wilmington High School. This acknowledgment and celebration of student accomplishments results in a positive learning environment and educational experience. (shadowing, school leaders, teachers, self-study)

There is a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive climate at Wilmington High School. Almost 80 percent of students and 96.6 percent of teachers report feeling safe at Wilmington High School. The students' comfort and safety is a function of the positive and supportive climate created by the school administration and staff. The presence of a school resource officer along with a positive working relationship with town safety officials also supports the safe environment of Wilmington High School. There are two full-time hall monitors observing the coming and going of students and visitors. A safety committee comprised of guidance counselors, teachers, administrators, school resource officer, and nurse plan emergency response protocols. There is a sense of great pride amongst students, teachers, administrators, and community members, which is built and fostered by the athletic programs, music ensembles, and outreach groups including the Gay-Straight Alliance and Ambassador Program. Students have a sense of ownership of Wilmington High School through the myriad of extracurricular activities and opportunities, resulting in a safe and supportive learning environment. (shadowing, self-study, school leadership, parents, students, Endicott Survey)

The Wilmington school board supports the implementation of the school's mission and student learning expectations. The school board believes its role is to support the district strategic plan through communication with the superintendent. The school board provides ample autonomy to the high school principal to implement the school's mission and continues to advocate for the sustaining of current staffing levels ensuring manageable class sizes. The school board supports the positive school climate through avoiding transportation fees and the introduction of student fees, allowing all students open access to extracurricular and athletic opportunities. District leaders praise the visibility of school board members at various school functions and events and appreciate the school board's support of school initiatives. The school board is actively advocating for a new high school building. The school board's continued support of the high school principal's efforts and the five-year plan ensures the best learning environment for Wilmington High School students. (central office personnel, district leaders, school committee, school leaders, self-study)

Commendations

1. The support of the principal's five-year plan by both the superintendent and school board
2. The principal as educational leader of Wilmington High School

3. The curriculum team leader model for continued collaboration within departments and advocating and communicating with school and district administration
4. The addition of the community service graduation requirement
5. The variety of extracurricular opportunities for students
6. The maintenance of reasonable class sizes
7. The structure of Wilmington University
8. Remarkable acknowledgement and celebration of student accomplishments
9. The positive relationship between the school board and school administration

Recommendations

1. Research and discuss, with a view to adopting, student grouping patterns that reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, reflect current research and best practices and support the achievement of the school's mission and expectations for student learning
2. Research and discuss, with a view to revising, the current policy of advanced placement course selection to allow all students the opportunity to benefit from this challenging curriculum based on student interests
3. Study and implement a process to provide common planning time for faculty members
4. Study and adopt a realistic passing time between classes
5. Implement a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult member of the school community besides the school guidance counselor who personalizes each student's educational experience

6

SUPPORT STANDARD

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Student learning and well-being are dependent upon adequate and appropriate support programs and services. The school is responsible for providing an effective range of integrated resources to enhance and improve student learning and well-being and to support the school's mission and expectations.

All Student Support Services

1. The school's student support services shall be consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
2. The school shall allocate resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's expectations for student learning.
3. Student support personnel shall enhance student learning by interacting and working cooperatively with professional and other staff and by utilizing community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students.
4. All student support services shall be regularly evaluated and revised to support improved student learning.
5. There shall be a system for effective and ongoing communication with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel, designed to keep them informed about the types of available student support services and identified student needs.
6. Student records, including health and immunization records, shall be maintained in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal and state law.

7. There shall be sufficient certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide effective counseling, health, special education, and library media services.

Guidance Services

8. The school shall provide a full range of comprehensive guidance services, including:
 - individual and group meetings with counseling personnel;
 - personal, career, and college counseling;
 - student course selection assistance;
 - collaborative outreach to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers;
 - appropriate support in the delivery of special education services for students.

Health Services

9. The school's health services shall provide:
 - preventive health services and direct intervention services;
 - appropriate referrals;
 - mandated services;
 - emergency response mechanisms;
 - ongoing student health assessments.

6

SUPPORT STANDARD

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Library Information Services

10. The library/information services program and materials shall be fully integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program.
11. Library/information services personnel shall be knowledgeable about the curriculum and support its implementation.
12. A wide range of materials, technologies, and other library/information services that are responsive to the school's student population shall be available to students and faculty and utilized to improve teaching and learning.
13. Students, faculty, and support staff shall have regular and frequent access to library/information services, facilities, and programs as an integral part of their educational experience before, during, and after the school day.
14. The library/information services program shall foster independent inquiry by enabling students and faculty to use various school and community information resources and technologies.
15. Policies shall be in place for the selection and removal of information resources and the use of technologies and the Internet.

Special Education Services

16. The school shall provide special education services related to the identification, monitoring, and referral of students in accordance with local, state, and federal laws.

Conclusions

All Student Support Services

The school's support services are consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning. Staff members are able to identify and demonstrate evidence of incorporating academic, social and civic expectations into the design and operation of guidance, library, and health services. The special education services support students in meeting the civic expectations for community service as a graduation requirement as well as addressing academic and social expectations. Through instruction and support, special education personnel encourage the development and utilization of alternative methods for students to become effective problem-solvers and communicators that utilize interpersonal skills to advocate for their needs. By assisting in the development of research skills, the librarian encourages students to be self-directed learners, but considers its print resources to be limited. Guidance personnel strive to support the emotional development of all students, work with students to identify learning styles, interests, and future goals and collaborate with other school resources for learning to optimize student performance. Because of the correlation between the school's mission statement and the practices and operating philosophy of the school's resources for learning, there is improved student performance. (self-study, guidance mission statement, students, guidance counselors, student-parent handbook)

The student support services provide many services that, in most areas, provide equal access and opportunity to achieve the school's expectation for student learning. There is a variety of services designed to make sure that each student's learning needs are being met. The guidance department offers counseling, scheduling, college admission assistance, and career information. Its members facilitate monitoring for students who are not performing well academically. Health services monitor the needs of all students with medical issues in addition to responding to the routine health needs of staff and students. The library is accessible to all students in classroom visits and on an individual basis. The special education department strives to place all students in the least restrictive environment that meets their individual learning needs. The Life Skills program affords Wilmington High School's substantially separate special education population with positive interaction with the educational community and the town of Wilmington at large. Their modified curriculum allows the class to have additional hands-on experiences that will benefit this population for post-secondary success in life's routine necessities. Other programs, such as WHS Summer School Extension Program, Virtual High School, School-to-Career, the job shadow program, and a night school credit recovery program offer opportunities for student success. The English language learner program, serving a small population, is staffed one block a day. Since all students have the opportunity to access support services, they can benefit from the services that are provided. (self-study, observation, students)

The school's support services demonstrate that student learning is enhanced by cooperation and interaction among the school supports for learning, other school personnel, and utilization of community resources. The Wildcat Project (a program that addresses the current issue of substance abuse in the Wilmington community), student success team, after school extra help, additional mathematics classes, analysis of assessment and attendance data, academic monitoring sheets, education proficiency plans (EPPs), transition from middle school, grade

level seminars, and health education services are made effective by the diligent cooperation and communication of school support staff with the resource officer, building administrators, central office personnel, and community leaders and stakeholders. Health services faculty members communicate the exceptional medical needs of students to teachers annually. In the development and implementation of individualized education programs (IEPs) however, the liaisons do not consistently consult with guidance personnel in development of the student vision statement, and do not regularly share disability and evaluation information with teaching staff members, health services, and guidance staff. Complete copies of student IEPs are available to members of the support staff via hard copy located in the main office as well as the high school special education office. The communication and collaboration among school support services and with other school personnel and vested members of the community has provided students with a level of comfort and security that enhances learning, but this area of inconsistency in communicating IEP information compromises instruction and must be eliminated. (guidance counselors, self-study, student-parent handbook)

Student support services use a variety of evaluation methods to ensure they are supporting improved student learning. School administrators follow the workings of these departments through anecdotal evidence and, in the case of the library media specialist (LMS), through the teacher evaluation process. Curriculum team leaders oversee guidance and special education. The nurse leader oversees and evaluates the health services department in conjunction with building administrators. The guidance department uses self-evaluation, senior evaluation, and community feedback to set improvement goals each year. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education insures that the special education department is in compliance with the state Coordinated Performance Review. The LMS is evaluated every other year by school administrators and in the alternate year proposes a self-directed plan that identifies areas in need of improvement. Because checks and balances are in place, delivery of teaching and learning can be monitored and improved where necessary. (self-study, observation, student support staff, state CPR review)

The school resources for learning have systems for effective and ongoing communication with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel to keep them informed of the types of available student support services and identified student needs. The guidance and health services department provides communication through a variety of means including website, parent information nights, community cable programming, blogs, newsletters, brochures, and staff trainings. Health services, special education, and guidance personnel report they make phone or e-mail contact with parents to address concerns. Meetings with students take place routinely and as needed with special education, library and guidance members. The librarian is available to teaching staff members and students to assist with the development of curriculum materials and resources for learning and research. Communication between parents and the librarian takes place through the school newsletter. The parent-student handbook provides descriptions of the health, guidance, library, and cafeteria services but no indication of the special education referral process, services, or program descriptions. The systems for effective and ongoing communication provide opportunities for members of the school community to access general and current information about the available services enabling them to independently identify services to meet student needs. The parent-student handbook does not identify how special education services may be accessed, however, nor does it describe the variety and placement criteria for programs so it leaves members of the school community

uninformed about special education resources, a very important component of student services. Thus, a description of special needs services and information about processes to access them must be included in the handbook. (parent-student handbook, school support staff, student support staff, parents, self-study)

Student records, including health and immunization records, are maintained in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal and state law. Current student biographical and academic files are kept in locked file cabinets in a secure location, along with the records of graduates and students who have withdrawn or transferred over the past 60 years. Medical information cards are kept on the counter in the nurses' office throughout day but locked up at night. Specific health information is kept in a locked cabinet and accessed as needed. Digital health records are kept in SNAP, a software program that is accessed only by the nurses. General records are kept in MMS. Both programs are password protected. The health cards are in an accessible location: they would not be as convenient if they were kept in the interior office, but they would be more secure. When they are maintained in a secure manner, student records can be readily accessed and the school has all the necessary safeguards. (self-study, observation, school support staff, facility tour)

There are sufficient certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide effective counseling, special education, and health services, but the library media services need to be brought into line with state recommendations. The school psychologist and social worker are available approximately two and one-half days a week to provide direct services to students on individualized education programs (IEPs) and general education students in crisis. The caseload size for guidance is manageable to allow for students to access staff members for routine and drop-in meetings. Through grant funds, nursing coverage has increased the number of licensed personnel to meet the ongoing and preventive health needs of the school community. The ability of the librarian to manage resources and deliver the level of support required for collaboration with content area teachers to serve curriculum and learning is impeded, according to the librarian, by a lack of an assistant. The assistant's job was eliminated at the end of the 2008-2009 school year because of limited library use by students and teachers. There is adequate number of special education personnel, licensed and education support professionals, to meet the service delivery needs of students in need of instruction in a substantially separate setting. The high school provides instruction in the least restrictive setting with two co-taught model classes, Biology and Algebra I. Because overall support staff levels are sufficient, learning is enhanced. (student support staff, school leaders, coordinated program review, health services bargaining agreement, guidance caseload information)

Guidance Services

The school provides a full range of guidance services. There is routine communication with students in both group and individual settings depending on the needs of the students. Students frequently drop in to the guidance department to ask questions. If their guidance counselor is not available, students are comfortable speaking to other guidance staff members. The guidance department operations and resources provide students with opportunities for personal, career, and college counseling as well as course selection and modifications. There is opportunity for some students with special needs to have their courses hand-scheduled in order to accommodate learning styles and personalities. This is done in collaboration with the special education department to assure that delivery of instruction is appropriate to meet needs of the

student. The guidance department provides information to students and parents about community-based mental health/human service agencies as well as employment and education transition and support programs. The guidance department does not receive copies of complete individualized education programs (IEPs), but they are made available both in the main office and the SPED office at the high school. Guidance counselors claim that their IEP meeting participation is limited to transcript and credit review. While career and interest inventories are completed by the guidance department, this information does not appear to be shared with the special education liaisons for inclusion in individual students' IEP. To ensure success for all students, guidance personnel, and special education personal need to align and collaborate to address counseling, planning and instructional support. (guidance counselors, student support staff, school leaders, self-study, parent-student handbook, parents, students, Endicott Survey)

Wilmington High School's health services provide for comprehensive services to meet the well-being of the school community. The mission of health services aligns with the school's mission by providing for the physical, social, intellectual, and emotional well-being of students and staff members. There is close and frequent communication and collaboration between health services and other support services including special education, guidance, and the school resource officer. Nursing professionals provide referrals and information about community providers to students and staff members as well as mandated screenings, ongoing prescribed treatment, and emergency responses. The health services department sets goals annually and reports on the status of services annually, monthly, and through grant requirements providing for continuous review and quality improvement. The health services are comprehensive and support the mission and expectations of Wilmington High School. (parent-student handbook, students, parents, health personnel, health services brochure)

Library Information Services

The library/information services program and materials are not fully integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional program. The LMS meets informally with teachers to insure that library services serve the curriculum. The social studies department has collaborated with the LMS to implement a standard research lesson with all ninth grade history students. Teachers in the English department separately bring tenth grade classes for an introduction to the library and the services it provides. The LMS has created lessons on many research and information literacy themes that would add value to many curricular assignments. Library purchases are made with school curriculum in mind when the budget allows. Thus, the lack of faculty awareness regarding the potential services of the library as well as the minimal collaborative planning keeps the library from being an effective part of the curricular life of the school. (school support staff, teachers, self-study)

The library media specialist is knowledgeable about the curriculum, but has been unable to effectively help support its implementation. The LMS keeps abreast of changes and trends in school curriculum. Curriculum team leaders and teachers are encouraged to contact the LMS about curriculum needs throughout the year. The majority of the staff reports that the LMS is knowledgeable regarding curriculum and instruction needs, but few report consulting with her when developing or revising curriculum and instruction.. A change in the climate of learning and research instruction included in curricula, requiring consultation with the librarian and her active involvement in planning lessons and creating curricula would benefit both the teachers and the students. (school support staff, teachers, students, self-study, Endicott Survey)

A limited range of materials, technologies, and other library/information services that are responsive to the school's student population is available to students and faculty members and utilized to improve some teaching and learning. The print collection in the library is significantly outdated. The yearly budget is used to update specific sections, but the process is slow as a result of the lack of funds. Current subscriptions to twenty print periodicals are used to supplement the state-funded database offerings. The principal funds the Opposing Viewpoints database out of his discretionary fund. These databases and other web resources are accessed on desktop and laptop computers. The majority of students reports that the library has the materials they need, but a significantly smaller percentage of the staff feels that the resources are adequate. Some topics are covered in print and non-print materials, but some topics are underrepresented. The LMS provides teacher training on some topics to faculty members on a one-to-one basis, but has not yet provided any broader professional development opportunities. Increased materials, technology, and information services would position the library to be a driving force in improving teaching and learning at Wilmington High School. (school support staff, teachers, self-study, Endicott Survey)

Students, faculty, and support staff have regular and frequent access to library/information services, facilities, and programs as an integral part of their educational experience during the school day and limited access before and after school. Teachers are encouraged to schedule their classes to attend the library as part of research-based assignments. Students who take part in the Virtual High School program and those who have an AP seminar (a focused study period for students taking two or more AP classes) are scheduled in the library. Recently a grant-based after-school help program was initiated in the library three days a week. The English language learner teacher meets with her students in the library each morning and has volunteered to open the library early each morning. These teachers allow students who are not taking part in their programs to remain in the library for curricular work. The Life Skills students spend one block a day in the library learning library skills and social and work skills as they assist with library tasks. There are currently no structures in place to ensure that full use of the library's services can be made by the classes that attend or that collaboration takes place between the LMS and the content area teacher. Just over one-quarter of the students reports that they use the library during the school day, while nearly half of the parents polled say that they believe their children use the library services. While more than half of teachers report their formal curriculum includes library content, less than 50 percent uses the library to prepare for instruction. While access to the library during the school day is available, the uneven use of the library keeps it from becoming a core part of school learning and instruction. (school support staff, teachers, students, self-study, Endicott Survey)

The library/information services program fosters independent inquiry to some degree by enabling students and faculty members to use various school and community information resources and technologies. By its nature, any library provides the tenacious learner with resources to begin investigation on a topic. The library's lack of an automated circulation or digital cataloging is an impediment to its full potential, however, and students are required to learn the method of finding print resources through a card catalog. There is communication between the public library and the WHS library. Public library events are promoted, and the LMS can share student information needs she knows of with the public library staff. No

methods are in place to take advantage of interlibrary loans from the public library for learners at the high school. The lack of print resources and limited number of computers also keeps the library from meeting the needs of those doing independent inquiry. Because of the outdated systems and resources in place in the library, students and faculty members are forced to supplement library services with those of other institutions if they have access to them. (facility tour, parents, school support staff, teachers, self-study)

Policies are in place for the selection and removal of information resources and the use of technologies and the Internet. The Internet use policy is detailed in the student handbook and the WHS Internet Access Network Application located in handbook must be signed by parents before students are permitted to access the Internet in the school. The "WebBlocker" firewall prevents access to inappropriate websites as does the presence of teachers and the library media specialist when students are in the library. A selection policy, a withdrawal policy, and a policy for weeding the library collection are detailed in the district policy manual. The policies that are in place in the library illustrate a strong commitment to making sure that students have access to high quality information in a safe environment. (school support staff, teachers, self-study, district policy manual)

The special education services in the school in conjunction with the central office administration have effectively provided for the identification, monitoring, and referral of students in accordance with local, state, and federal laws. The building department chair and central office team chair supervise special education staff, services, and documentation at a level that assures compliance. There is an intermediate monitoring system in addition to mandated progress reporting for the documentation of progress, concerns, and identification of services. The central administration has provided special education personnel with staff training to meet the deficiencies identified in the most recent Coordinated Program Review (CPR). Since the requirement for instruction in the least restrictive setting is not maximized for students based on their level of need and modification, some students may benefit from alternate placement. (Coordinated Program Review, special education personnel, special education record maintenance policy)

Commendations

1. Personnel in guidance, health services, library media, and special education for their commitment to student success
2. The ELL teacher for providing additional access to the library media center on a volunteer basis as well as services to a diverse population across the entire district
3. Health services, guidance, and special education demonstration of extraordinary levels of collaboration, communication and coordination that allow for immediate and individualized support for students on both a routine and crisis basis
4. The Life Skills program that provides exemplary resources for access to the community (transportation for community access, materials for the development of activities of daily living skills) that enable the instruction of the modified curriculum to be more meaningful and interesting for those students

Recommendations

1. Implement a library catalog automation process to bring school up to current standards

2. Implement a plan for more collaborative teaching between special and general education teachers to strengthen link between presentation and content
3. Involve the library media specialist in collaborative planning of curriculum and instruction with content area teachers
4. Increase collaboration between the library program and community resources
5. Update and increase library materials

7

SUPPORT STANDARD

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Active community and parent participation, facilities which support school programs and services, and dependable and adequate funding are necessary for the school to achieve its mission and expectations for student learning.

1. The school shall engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and shall encourage their participation in school programs and parent support groups.
2. The school shall foster productive business/community/higher education partnerships that support student learning.
3. The school site and plant shall support and enhance all aspects of the educational program and the support services for student learning.
4. The physical plant and facilities shall meet all applicable federal and state laws and shall be in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.
5. Equipment shall be adequate, properly maintained, catalogued, and replaced when appropriate.
6. A planned and adequately funded program of building and site management shall ensure the appropriate maintenance, repair, and cleanliness of the school plant.
7. There shall be ongoing planning to address future programs, enrollment changes, staffing, facility, and technology needs as well as capital improvements.
8. The community and the district's governing body shall ensure an adequate and dependable source of revenue to provide and maintain appropriate school programs, personnel, services, facilities, equipment, technological support, materials, and supplies for student learning.
9. Faculty and building administrators shall have active involvement in the budgetary process, including its development and implementation.

Conclusions

Wilmington High School engages parents and families as partners in each student's education and has opportunities for parents to participate in school programs and support groups. Wilmington High School enables parent contact with the school and teachers through phone, e-mail and scheduled appointments, although some parents admit frustration with e-mail response times. Other forms of communication include the school's website, teacher blogs, Alert Now (a telephone messaging service), eighth grade parent night, a newsletter, and a program on TV called "In The Loop" where the assistant superintendent highlights initiatives and activities. There are varied opportunities for parents to get involved that include Wilmington Education Foundation, parent advisory council (PAC), special education parent advisory council (SEPAC), school advisory council (SAC), drama - choral and theater support (CATS), theater volunteers, Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA), sports boosters, and Wilmington bands. Parents can also communicate with teachers and administrators by attending two open houses and the program of studies night held each year. Fostering open lines of communication between parents and the school promotes a positive learning environment for all students. (teachers, parent, student, school committee, central office personnel)

Wilmington High School has numerous business and community partnerships but limited higher education partnerships. Local businesses donate used equipment including furniture and computers in order to enhance student learning. Many local business leaders donate their time to help students in the business department's DECA program understand the various business fields and job intricacies. Over 40 Wilmington Chamber of Commerce members serve as mentors to students. The Wilmington Rotary has 120 student members who work on senior events, community clean-ups, and other community service projects. The school has limited partnerships with higher education, however, and there is no dual enrollment program. The science department brings in the Boston University City Lab bus and works with Salem State College to offer a half year Aquaculture class at the high school. The Wilmington Police Department provides a police resource officer. The students, teachers, and administrators recently mobilized to fundraise for those affected by the earthquake in Haiti. Students have a better understanding of the issues facing the community and businesses with increased interaction with professionals in these partnerships. (self-study, teachers, students, community resource standard committee)

The school site and plant do not support all aspects of the educational program and the support services for student learning. Wilmington High School's building has numerous flaws such as roof leaks, ceiling tiles needing replacement, floor tiles missing, overall limited storage space, and electrical problems. Wilmington High School houses original electrical wiring. There are not enough outlets in classrooms. As well, the building's infrastructure and space limitations adversely affect technology implementation. According to the WHS master plan, the boiler is in need of updating: some rooms are hot, while others are cold. Ten teachers rotate rooms and teach in five different classrooms. Some of the science labs do not have sufficient gas outlets and sink stations. The nurses' office space is smaller than recommended by the Massachusetts

School Building Authority, the school's psychologist office is housed in a space that was once used as a book closet. The additional mounting of classroom projectors is hindered by the condition of some of the ceilings. Guidance is storing departmental permanent records in an old bathroom. Although the school's student to computer ratio is below the state recommended guidelines, many of the computer labs are not accessible to students or classroom teachers since there are scheduled classes using them. Many departments do not have their own storage and are forced to share their limited space with other departments. The school site and plant adversely affect student learning by limiting the resources that would normally be available to make teaching and learning effective. Students are affected with time-on-learning by going to their lockers in order to either get their coat or remove their coats because of the changing temperature of the classrooms. Although students have reported that they feel safe in the building, all the infrastructure issues are a distraction to the delivery and implementation of instruction. (self-study, teachers, students, community resource standard committee, guidance department, facility tour)

Wilmington High School is in compliance with all federal, state and local laws. Air quality readings conducted by Envirotest Labs (Jan 2009) show no issues with the quality of the air including mold but make recommendations in regard to airflow issues. The cafeteria is in compliance with the Wilmington Board of Health standards. The fire department conducted an inspection of the facility in June 2009. The inspection noted that kitchen hood inspections need to be done on a semiannual basis. Currently they are conducted annually. The fire department sprinkler-system inspection noted several deficiencies that were fixed within a day. Certificates of compliance and inspections were difficult to find, however. A safe school alleviates any worries a student might have about their own personal safety, allowing them to focus on their own learning. (building and grounds supervisor, community resource standard committee, school leaders, self-study, local fire inspection report)

Wilmington High School's equipment is inadequate. Classroom teachers have a computer on their desk, but students report difficulty accessing technology due to class and computer lab/library limitations. Only 53 percent of students reports the furniture and equipment in their classroom are in good condition. The science department is in need of updated science equipment. Many issues regarding maintenance of the building are handled and fixed on a timely matter by the custodian on duty. Each department is responsible for maintaining and cataloging the equipment used in their department with the exception of computers, printers, mimeos, digital projectors and SMARTBoards which are under the control of the district office of information technology. There is no centralized system for cataloging furniture and equipment although all technology-related equipment is inventoried by the Office of Information Technology. The curriculum team leaders in each department submit an annual budget with request for proper maintenance or replacement for the equipment in their departments. Teachers report that maintenance requests for building related items such as burned-out light bulbs are fixed relatively quickly, requests for technology repair such as printers takes too long. The school did receive many new computers that were installed over the summer. The inadequacy of equipment adversely affects student learning, however. Students who do not have access to a complete science lab miss out on the opportunity for hands-on learning that takes place in labs. (self-study, teachers, observation, students, Endicott Survey)

Given that the Wilmington High School was built in 1950, there is a system of planned and adequate maintenance of the building. However, there are numerous problems with the physical plant including the HVAC system, floor tile, the roof, and electrical problems that limit the buildings and grounds department's ability to maintain the building in working order. The director of buildings and grounds relates there is a capital improvement plan to address major issues and problems and a system in place to deal with immediate problems. The custodial staff is employed by the Town of Wilmington, not the school district, so that all maintenance is directed by the town. This system appears to work for the school. Both parents and students feel generally that the school is clean and safe. Staff members also feel that, although the age of the building inhibits overall maintenance, the custodial staff does a good job. Custodians are visible in the school and do follow a regular plan to clean the school. Emergency issues are addressed by the head custodian. During the accreditation visit, the roof leaked in several locations as a result of a driving rain storm. This challenged the day staff to keep hallways dry. Roof repair has been a regular part of the maintenance budget, but the ballasted roof is aged and needs further attention. All maintenance issues are directed through the assistant principal to the head custodian and then to the town's buildings and grounds department. Major items are budgeted through the town manager and then scheduled by the town buildings and grounds coordinator. Daily problems and issues are addressed on a case by case basis. While a maintenance and capital improvement plan exists and there is ongoing maintenance provided, both daily maintenance and capital improvement are inhibited by the overall age of the physical plant. (director of buildings and grounds, head custodian, school leaders, building tour, self-study)

There are on-going efforts to plan for the future of high school needs in Wilmington, including the study of enrollment trends, staffing, facility, capital and technological needs. The Wilmington School District utilizes the New England School Development Council to study student enrollment trends which are presently stable. The school population at the high school has been relatively flat for a two-year period and is projected to be stable for three years. It is generally recognized that the present Wilmington High School is in need of either major renovations and additions or a new high school needs to be constructed to meet the on-going effort to provide 21st century education. A building committee regularly meets to assess the needs of the school district schools and to analyze student population data and review the capital improvement plan. The building committee is chaired by the Town of Wilmington's Director of Buildings and Grounds and includes parents, teachers, school administrators, and students. This committee has recommended that the school district move forward with approaching voters to approve a feasibility study to investigate the present and future needs of Wilmington High School. This is in conjunction with conversations with the Massachusetts School Building Authority. A technology plan does exist for the school, but this plan is also largely dependent upon future plans for the school. Recent efforts to upgrade technology in the school include computers, SMARTBoards, clicker technology and mimeo boards. While there are still major gaps in implementation of the technology plan for teachers and students, the ratio of students to computers is an acceptable 3.1 to 1. Electrical issues inhibit the ability to place computers and other technology learning and teaching tools in classrooms, however. The Wilmington School District is preparing for the future, having conducted necessary student population studies and is in process of assessing the educational needs for secondary education, whether by renovating the present facility or building a new high school. This effort will hopefully move the school district forward in providing a high quality 21st century education to

its secondary population. (director of buildings and grounds, school leaders, central office personnel, parents, teachers, students, community resource committee, capital improvement plan, self-study)

The community, the Town of Wilmington, and the Wilmington School Committee provide the basic source of revenue to provide and maintain Wilmington High School programs, staffing, facilities, services, and technology. Although the Town of Wilmington and the school district spend money cautiously, they do spend funds on the high school. Given the age of this facility and current state of disrepair, it is difficult to provide sufficient dollars to fix all the problems. The buildings and grounds department attempts to address major issues, but the presence of asbestos as mentioned in the AHERA report, older wiring, and leaking roofs hinder their ability to address these problems in a cost-effective manner. Wilmington High School has adequate staff to provide an educational program. In the past several years, a major initiative has been undertaken to improve technology holdings and provide technological tools to enhance delivery of teaching and learning. While the technology plan is not fully rolled-out, progress is being made. A wide range of support services is offered, and there is ample opportunity to learn outside of the school and to participate in school/business partnerships and with cooperative programs. Faculty and staff members make every effort to provide education to all students, but they are impacted negatively by a dated facility which inhibits the ability for the staff to teach and the students to learn. (teachers, students, parents, central office, school leadership, self-study, director of buildings and grounds, head custodian, facilities tour)

The faculty and building administration have active involvement in the development of the annual budget. The budget process begins in early October of each year. The curriculum team leaders assemble request from individual department members and submit a compiled request to the principal. The principal reviews all request and based on guidance from the superintendent and school district business manager prepares a school-wide budget. This budget is reviewed with the school council. The principal makes suggestions about modifications and changes to the curriculum team leaders. The requested school budget is submitted to the superintendent and school district business manager. The amalgamated school district budget is a compilation of all schools budget request plus request of the superintendent. This budget is submitted to the town manager for review and comment. Changes and modifications are made to the school district budget after reflection of the town manager and synthesized with request from other town departments. The town manager's total request for town expenditures is a reflection based on the net effect on Town of Wilmington's overall tax rate and the effort to continue to make the town an affordable community. Modification, changes or amendments to the school budget flow backward from the town manger to the superintendent to building administration. The principal communicates these changes to the curriculum team leaders and department heads. After the final budget is established by vote of the town, the principal establishes the working budget with the curriculum team leaders and department heads. Though the school district and town budgets are always developed and implemented with an eye toward "affordability", Wilmington High School is provided with basic funds to operate and address the overall need to meet the mission and expectations of student learning. (teachers, school leaders, central office, Town of Wilmington Director of Buildings and Grounds, parents, students; panel presentation, self-study, community resource committee)

Commendations

1. Efforts by the staff to utilize outside community resources
2. Involvement of members of the business community in the student's educational program
3. Effort to reach 21st century skills by infusing more technology in the building
4. Efforts of the custodial staff keeping the building in as good repair as possible
5. The work to reach the feasibility study part of the Massachusetts School Building Authority

Recommendations

1. Complete the study of facilities needs and follow prescribed local and Massachusetts School Building Authority process
2. Follow and implement the recommendations regarding the air quality test conducted by Envirotest Labs
3. Increase higher education partnerships
4. Verify the asbestos abatement plan is up to date and the areas affected are consistently checked
5. Evaluate the condition of the HVAC system and roof and develop plans to keep both in safe and working condition for the short term until a decision is made with regards to the building

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

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

To ensure that it has current information about the school, the Commission has an established Policy on Substantive Change requiring that principals of member schools report to the Commission within sixty days (60) of occurrence any substantive change which negatively impacts the school's adherence to the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The report of substantive change must describe the change itself and detail any impact which the change has had on the school's ability to meet CPSS Standards. The Commission's Substantive Change Policy is included in the Appendix on page 90. All other substantive changes should be included in the Two- and Five-Year Progress Reports and/or the Annual Report which is required of each member school to ensure that the Commission office has current statistical data on the school.

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

The visiting team would like to commend the Wilmington High School community, particularly the high school's administration and NEASC visit co-chairs, for their outstanding hospitality and attention to detail during the visit. This group of committed educators made the team feel like part of WHS and its tangible, omnipresent pride.

APPENDIX A
VISITING TEAM ROSTER

Marc Bender, Holliston Public Schools, Holliston, Mass.

Jonathan Bourn, Abington Public Schools, Abington, Mass.

Nora Curran, Wellesley Public Schools, Wellesley, Mass.

Barbara Fecteau, Beverly Public Schools, Beverly, Mass.

Marybeth Funder, Marshfield, Public Schools, Marshfield, Mass.

Paula Hamel, Dracut Public Schools, Dracut, Mass.

Mary Harten, Dighton-Rehoboth Public Schools, Dighton, Mass.

Kate Jarocki, Middleboro Public Schools, Middleboro, Mass.

Tara Kohler, Fairhaven Public Schools, Fairhaven, Mass.

Andrew Linkenhoker, Monson High School, Monson, Mass.

Brian McCann, chair, Swansea Public School, Swansea, Mass.

Charles Mone, Dracut Public Schools, Dracut, Mass.

Keith Pfeifer, assistant chair, Grantham School District, Grantham, N.H.

Lois Rossiter, Grafton Public Schools, Grafton, Mass.

APPENDIX B.

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

Commission on Public Secondary Schools

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

- elimination of fine arts, practical arts, and student activities
- diminished upkeep and maintenance of facilities
- significantly decreased funding
- cuts in the level of administrative and supervisory staffing
- cuts in the number of teachers and/or guidance counselors
- cuts in the number of support staff
- decreases in student services
- cuts in the educational media staffing
- increases in student enrollment that cannot be accommodated
- 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
- identification by the state as an underperforming school
- takeover by the state
- inordinate user fees