NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE

Epping Middle and High School
Epping, NH

March 8 – March 11, 2015

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STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

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

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Statement On Limitations

APPENDICES

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Study

A steering committee of the professional staff was appointed to supervise the myriad details inherent in the school's self-study. At Epping Middle and High School, a committee of 10 members, including the principal, supervised all aspects of the self-study. The steering committee assigned all teachers and administrators in the school to appropriate subcommittees to determine the quality of all programs, activities and facilities available for young people. In addition to faculty members, the self-study committees included parents, students and board members on a limited basis. The Student Leadership Team was consulted on a regular basis by the Steering Committee.

The self-study of Epping Middle and High School extended over a period of fifteen school months from August 2013 to November 2014. The visiting committee was pleased to note that some parents, students and board members joined the professional staff in the self-study deliberations.

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

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Committee

A visiting committee of sixteen evaluators was assigned by the Committee on Public Secondary Schools to evaluate the Epping Middle and High School. The Committee members spent four days in Epping NH, reviewed the self-study documents which had been prepared for their examination, met with administrators, teachers, other school and system personnel, students and parents, shadowed students, visited classes, and interviewed teachers to determine the degree to which the school meets the Committee's Standards for Accreditation. Since the evaluators represented public schools, central office administrators. The visiting committee built its professional judgment on evidence collected from the following sources:

- review of the school's self-study materials

- 39.75 hours shadowing 16 students for a half day

- a total of 30 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 33 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning

- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers

- the examination of student work including a selection of work collected by the school

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

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

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY SUMMARY

The Epping School District is proud of its small community school system serving approximately 1,000 students in grades pre-school through twelve. Epping Middle and High Schools, serving grades six through twelve (6-8 & 9-12), are located in southern New Hampshire at the crossroads of major NH routes 125 and 101, about 16 miles west of the seacoast. The schools are fed by Epping Elementary School (pre-school - 5) located next door in the same educational complex. The town was incorporated in 1741 and boasts as being the "Home of Three Governors." The Town of Epping has a population of 6,411 (December, 2013) and covers 26.2 square miles. The community is mainly residential with many residents commuting to the larger metropolitan areas of Boston, MA and Manchester and Portsmouth, NH. Recent development along the Route 125 corridor has provided local jobs numbering over 500.

The families in the school district are economically diverse, but racially and ethnically similar. With the exception of Hispanic (.02%) and Asian (.02%), no other minority group comprises more than .01% of the student population. The median per capita four-person family income is $71,091 (2011). In 2011, 7.7% of Epping families were living below the poverty level. During the 2011-12 school year, 19 (4 hs, 4 ms) students were considered homeless within the district; 11 for 2012-13 (1 hs, 1 ms); and 19 (3 hs, 0 ms) for the 2013-14 school year. District-wide, 281 students (27%) were receiving free/reduced lunch in November of 2013. Of that number, 75 (27%) were in the high school and 60 (29%) were in the middle school.

The Epping School District's per pupil expenditure for the 2011-12 school year was $14,702.93 compared with the state average of $13,159.15. Epping's middle school expenditure was $14,424.71 ($12,605.50 - state); the high school expenditure was $17,136.31 ($13,101.48 - state). Sixty-seven percent ($16.23) of the 2012 tax rate of $24.27 was allocated to the schools. Seventy-five percent of the revenue to support local schools is generated by the town; 20% is received from the state and 5% from the federal government.

Significant development along the Route 125 corridor in the past ten years has had a huge impact on the community. Two large retail developments, Epping Crossing and Brickyard Square, have provided much needed jobs and local shopping options. Epping Crossing's anchor store, a Super Walmart, employs 317 people. Lowes, a full service restaurant, a major bank branch, and several other retail outlets and food shops round out the development. Brickyard Square boasts a Super Market Basket (the town's largest employer with 400 employees) which is surrounded by a major movie theater, several big name retailers, and numerous restaurants. Expansion continues at the development.

Student populations for the 2013-2014 school year were as follows: 207, middle and 279, high school for a total of 486. Enrollment projections over a ten-year span predict the middle school to grow to 248 in 2023-24 and the high school to 336. The current school facilities are expected to be able to absorb the surge in enrollment. The high school dropout rate in 2011-2012 was 1.8% (1.3% state average) and 1.1% (1.2% state average) for the 2010-2011 school year. The graduation rate for 2012 was 77.65% (86.7% - state). The middle school attendance rate for 2011-12 was 95.4% (94.9% - state); the high school was 92.0 (93.3%- state) for a combined average of 93.7% (94.1% - state). The district's teacher attendance rate for the 2012-13 school year was 93.4%.

Seventy-one students graduated from Epping High School in 2012. Forty-six percent of the graduates went on to four-year colleges (31 students), and 25% (17) went on to two-year colleges. Eight percent (6) joined the military; 11% (8) entered into the work force, while 10% (7) were undecided at the time of graduation. With its close proximity to Epping, the University of New Hampshire is a major choice of graduating seniors. Great Bay Community College attracted many 2012 graduates looking for a two-year experience. Out of state choices in 2012 included the University of Connecticut, Clarkson University, Worcester Polytechnical Institute, Emmanuel College, Husson University, Lyndon State (VT), St. Joseph's of Maine, Southeastern University (FL), Bay Path College (MA), University of Maine, Thomas College (ME), Fisher College (MA), Jacksonville University, and the New England Institute of Art (MA).

Epping Middle and High Schools each has one full-time principal, and are able to maintain separate identities. Each school has its own assistant principal. The middle school has 19.5 classroom teachers and shares five others with the high school; nine special education paraprofessionals assist in the classrooms. There are two administrative assistants, one guidance counselor, and a special education building coordinator. Epping High School has 24 full-time time teachers, five others shared with the middle school, a special education building coordinator, three guidance counselors, a full-time media specialist, a media assistant, two administrative assistants, and a guidance administrative assistant. The school nurse, nursing assistant, speech and language assistant, athletic director, the athletic director's assistant and special education administrative assistant are all shared by the middle and high schools. Faculty and staff working throughout the district include the following: a school psychologist, an ESOL teacher, a technology director, and two technology assistants. Custodial services are provided by a facilities director, a head custodian, and eight full-time custodians. The kitchen is under the direction of the district's food services supervisor with five assistants. The central office includes the superintendent of schools, the business administrator, the director of special education, the superintendent's administrative assistant, the district financial assistant, and the administrative assistant to the director of special education.

The middle and high schools also share some facilities: the cafeteria, the media center, the band and chorus rooms, and the technology education rooms. Each school has its own gymnasium, and there are two computer labs in the high school and one in the middle school. The middle school has a small literacy center which also houses eight computers. The high school has 24 regular classrooms, while the middle school has 17. A 2004-2007 addition/renovation project to the present high school created the separate middle school, freeing up much needed space for the high school. The addition/renovation also included a new high school office suite and a new high school gymnasium.

Epping High School offers learning opportunities in various settings. Adult education programs for GED and GED prep, adult enrichment classes, and adult diploma classes are offered at nearby Exeter Adult Education. Credit and competency recovery can be achieved through NovaNet, both during the school year and in the summer. Participation in the Virtual Learning Academy Courses (VLACS) can earn students high school credit. VLACS's Running Start courses allow students to earn high school and college credit at the same time. EHS is a sending member of the Seacoast School of Technology, providing opportunities for career and technical education. An articulation agreement exists between EHS and Southern New Hampshire University, whereby Epping students receive special consideration for application review and scholarships. EHS sends ten students to the University of New Hampshire's Project SEARCH which provides on-campus challenging experiences for academically motivated juniors and seniors from ten high schools in Southern Maine and the Seacoast Area of New Hampshire.

As the Epping business sector has expanded, so have school and business partnerships. School to work opportunities have developed between EHS and both Market Basket and CG Sports. Walmart continues to be a strong financial supporter of the schools and continues to honor teachers each year. The school's principal has recently begun meeting with representatives of Orange Leaf and other Brickyard Square businesses in hopes of developing further school/business relationships.

Students are recognized for their achievements on a regular basis throughout the school year. The middle school posts a quarterly honor roll, awarding honors and high honors status for both learning and work habits/effort. Bi-monthly pride assemblies recognize two students from each team for exemplifying the school's guiding principles. Students "caught being good" are also honored at the assemblies through the school's "Good Moves" program. The middle school has its own chapter of the National Junior Honor Society and features its members at an annual public induction ceremony/assembly. Athletic awards are presented at banquets each season. Scholastic Art awards are also presented once a year at a pride assembly. Eighth graders are recognized at an end of the year assembly and at an annual recognition night with top students being selected from each discipline; at these events, students are awarded Citizenship and Presidential honors, and the New England League of Middle School awards. Musicians are showcased at combined band and chorus concerts throughout the year, and All State Awards are given at the pride assemblies. Student art work is displayed throughout the school during the school year.

High school achievements are recognized at the Annual Awards night in June. Senior scholarships are given out at the Senior Banquet. The school's National Honor Society holds its induction annually. Like the middle school, a quarterly honor roll is posted, athletic banquets are held each season, the band and chorus are featured at concerts throughout the year, and student art work is prominent throughout the school. Senior privileges and NECAP rewards are given recognizing significant achievement.

Student athletes are offered 20 team sports in which to participate at the high school level; middle school students are offered nine choices. In 2012, 109 high school students participated in fall sports, 56 in winter sport, and 56 in spring sports. At the middle school level, 54 students were on a fall sports team, 60 were on a winter sports team, and 62 were on a spring sports team. Epping Middle and high schools are proud of their athletic programs which complement their strong academic offerings.

Epping High School Mission Statement

The Epping High School community educates and empowers students within a safe environment to become respectful, involved, and knowledgeable 21st century learners and citizens.

Epping High School Guiding Principles

1. Respect and encourage the right to teach and the right to learn at all times.
2. Be actively engaged in learning; ask questions, collaborate, and seek solutions.
3. Be on time to fulfill your daily commitments.
4. Be appropriate; demonstrate behavior that is considerate of the community, the school, and yourself.
5. Be truthful; communicate honestly.
6. Be respectful and accountable for your choices.

COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

TEACHING AND LEARNING
STANDARDS

**CORE VALUES, BELIEFS, AND LEARNING
EXPECTATIONS**

CURRICULUM

INSTRUCTION

**ASSESSMENT OF AND FOR STUDENT
LEARNING**

1   Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

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

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

2. The school has challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies, and are defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted high levels of achievement.

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

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

Conclusions

The Epping School community actively engaged in a collaborative and partially inclusive process informed by current research-based practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning across the school. Based on meetings with administrators, faculty, students and parents, it is clear that some of the stakeholders were involved in the process of developing the school's guiding principles and 21st century learning expectations. They were developed over several years through work with an outside consultant, during time spent in discussions during faculty meetings and professional development days, by attending NEASC sponsored workshops and by participating in Olweus Bullying Prevention methodology training. In 2007, the middle school adopted six guiding principles based on review of other educational institutions. In 2012, the high school, after multiple meetings of the steering committee and faculty, voted to adopt the middle school mission statement, "Learners will be respectful, involved and knowledgeable." The process, however, excluded parents and students from giving input or of hearing the rationale behind the development of these core values and beliefs. Both the guiding principles and the 21st century learning expectations are clearly stated in student friendly language. Epping Middle and High School has clearly identified and is committed to its core values and beliefs as identified in the guiding principles and 21st century learning expectations, but in order for a meaningful investment of these values to take hold in the community, parents and students must be given the opportunity to ask questions and to give their input, on the six guiding principles and eight 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, teacher interviews, administrators, parents, student handbook)

Epping Middle and High School has challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students, which address academic, social, and civic competencies, and are defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify how students achieve or exceed expectations. Epping Middle and High School has developed 21st century learning expectations for all students. These eight 21st century skills are currently evaluated on all high school students' report cards. Middle school report cards will eventually be updated to account for these 21st century skills, although no time frame was given for this change. Currently, high school teachers evaluate students' progress on applicable 21st century skills. Through faculty interviews and from the Endicott survey results it is clear that faculty believes that these expectations are challenging. According to the Endicott survey, 59.8 percent of students are in complete agreement that their school's 21st century learning expectations are challenging, with 40 percent either being undecided or in total disagreement. Many student interviews indicated a lack of understanding of the embedded relationship of the expectations. In addition, students feel that the grades entered on the report cards for the learning skills are subjective. Some teachers are using the assessment tool in their classroom, however the expectations communicated on the report card have little meaning to the student body and their parents. Epping Middle and High School has created eight measurable 21st century learning expectations and has developed school-wide analytic rubrics for each with targeted levels of achievement. There is extensive use of course-specific rubrics throughout the school; however, use of the school-wide rubrics is not consistent. When the school and faculty make school-wide rubrics an integral part of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment, students will better understand the value of the skills and how to more effectively use them. (classroom observations, students, teacher interviews, Endicott survey, parents)

Epping Middle and High School's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school, help drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and are reflected upon and considered when decisions are made regarding policies, procedures, and resource allocations. Epping Middle School has embraced the six guiding principles and is working to integrate the 21st century learning expectations. Epping High School has defined the 21st century learning

expectations based upon the six guiding principles. The core beliefs and values are evident in the behavior and respect among students as well as by the pride expressed by students, parents, and staff. According to the Endicott survey, the majority of staff, students and parents believes that core values and beliefs are clear and are referenced in parent meetings and conferences and considered when making teaching decisions. In the middle school, monthly student meetings are held to recognize and commend those students who are working hard to follow these core beliefs. The school community believes the training in the Olweus Bullying Prevention program has been ingrained in their culture and has made a positive impact as it support the school's mission to "empower students within a safe environment to become respectful, involved, and knowledgeable 21st century learners and citizens." In the middle school, bi-monthly morning meetings are spent with a Bullying Prevention Curriculum developed by the middle school guidance counselor. When questioned, it is obvious that students across the grade levels feel safe at school and feel they have an adult that they are comfortable talking with. Both schools offer students opportunities to experience community service such as Community Service Day, athletic leadership programs, Special Olympics, and Project SEARCH with a high degree of student participation in these opportunities. The decision to employ a number of educational consultants has led to curriculum and instructional changes that support the school's core values and adoption of 21st century learning expectations such as the adoption of the *Framework for Effective Instruction (FEI)* model used at Epping High School in which teachers develop lesson and unit plans that emphasize principles such as defining learning goals, strategies, and higher order thinking. As a result of the many decisions made at all levels of the school community that reflect the core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations, Epping Middle and High School has a positive school culture that encourages learning, respect and involvement and gives students and faculty the opportunity to continue to practice and achieve their core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations. (classroom observations, teacher interviews, students, administrator interviews, curriculum guides, self-study)

Epping Middle and High School reviews and revises its core values, beliefs and 21st century learning expectations with some regularity based on research and data sources and with a strong sense of, and adherence to, district and school community priorities. Over the past decade, Epping Middle School and Epping High School have regularly reviewed and revised their core values and beliefs. The middle school adopted six guiding principles in 2007. Starting in 2010, the high school faculty began a review of different proposals, eventually adopting the six guiding principles in the middle school. Since the implementation of the new mission statement and guiding principles, many changes have been made to curriculum, instruction and assessment. After careful research of educational strategies and with an interest in standardization, the Epping Middle and High School worked with educational consultants to adopt and implement *Framework for Effective Instruction (FEI)*. Through this process, teachers develop lesson and unit plans that emphasize principles such as defining learning goals, strategies, and higher order thinking. Since the adoption of the guiding principles and 21st century learning expectations, Epping Middle and High School has seen specific changes to school policies and procedures as indicated in the self-study. At the high school, the discipline procedure has changed to include a new handbook and flowchart. Similarly, in the middle school, the discipline and behavior program policy has changed to create a new flowchart and handbook based on the core values of the school. It is apparent that the school's core values and beliefs are impacted by data by using NWEA data to evaluate student learning, and beginning in 2013, the district's use of the STAR Enterprise Assessment standardized testing system. The data collected from STAR tests helps faculty revise student learning expectations and institute Response to Intervention plans. Faculty and administrative interviews indicated that the review and revision of the core values and beliefs is an ongoing process. Additionally, school and community priorities are influenced by the core values and beliefs. An important priority fulfilled in 2012 was the coordination of the schools' core beliefs and values, grading systems, and

instructional practices between the middle and high school. Continued review and revision of the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations will ensure that they support the community's cohesiveness and pride and will serve as a driving force for curriculum, instruction and assessment in every classroom. (classroom observations, teacher interviews, self-study, school board)

Commendation:

1. The alignment of the Epping Middle and High School Core Values and Beliefs across grades to provide consistency in the school
2. The strong presence of and commitment to the core values, specifically the civic and social expectations
3. The "Blue Devil Pride" which is felt when one walks through the doors
4. The responsibility students assume for learning and behavior
5. The faculty, staff, and students who work collaboratively to foster a positive, safe, and nurturing school environment
6. The commitment to review and revise curriculum, instructional practices, and assessment, using best practices and relevant research

Recommendations:

1. Develop and implement a process to review the six guiding principles which is inclusive of all stakeholders--including parents and students to provide meaningful investment of these values throughout the community
2. Ensure the use of the school-wide rubrics as an integral component of the curriculum, instruction, assessment, and reporting process

2   Curriculum

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusions

The curriculum at Epping Middle/ High School is purposefully designed to include the school's 21st century learning expectations and these expectations are embedded in instructional practices for the majority of teachers. The *Framework for Effective Instruction (FEI)* is used across the school. The unit and lesson planning templates used in the context of the framework identify the 21st century learning expectations as well as the course competencies and lesson competencies as part of the planning model. The appropriate 21st century learning expectations are therefore addressed in each assignment, unit, and course. However, the 21st century learning expectations often appear to be of secondary importance to the course competencies. Because the 21st century learning expectations and content competencies are articulated in every unit and lesson plan, teachers are aware of the learning responsibilities, and the connections between course content and learning expectations are also clear. Eighty percent of parents agree that the curriculum provides their children with opportunities to achieve the school's learning expectations. Additionally, 69.4 percent of the staff agrees that the school's formal curriculum design ensures that all students practice and achieve all of the school's learning expectations. While student progress in the achievement of the 21st century learning expectations is reported on high school student report cards, students do not appear to be clear on how the notation of their progress is determined, and both teachers and students feel that the grade is somewhat subjective in spite of the existence of school-wide rubrics to assess progress on the these expectations. When the 21st century learning expectations function as the driving force for instruction, the school will be able to fully support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. (teacher interviews, parents, students, curriculum guides .

The curriculum is written in a common format that includes units of study, concepts, content, and skills, the school's 21st century learning expectations, instructional strategies, and assessment practices. However, the format does not include essential questions. While school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics exist, they are not used comprehensively in all departments. Content competencies, unit-specific competencies and 21st century learning expectations are included in unit plans. An ongoing relationship with an *FEI* consultant ensures consistent use of the unit planning model. Teachers are expected to submit unit plans to the principal who reviews lessons and units for fidelity to *FEI* as well as for the inclusion of the 21st century learning skills. Additionally, high school parents report that they are aware of the concepts, content, and skills addressed in their children's classes and feel course competencies and expectations are clearly communicated. With respect to assessment practices, parents report that they appreciate the use of analytic rubrics by the majority of teachers. Only the high school report card is competency-based at present*.* When the curriculum guides include essential questions, along with the present instructional strategies and assessment practices, then all students will have deeper connections to the concept matter and will increase student understanding. (self-study, curriculum guides, teacher interviews, parents)

The curriculum, to varying degrees, emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through inquiry and problem solving, higher order thinking, cross-disciplinary learning, authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school, and informed and ethical use of technology by the majority of students. Both students and parents report that the curriculum is challenging. Seventy-seven percent of students agree that the content of the courses they take challenges them to think critically and solve problems. Additionally, 84 percent of staff agrees that the formal curriculum in their subject area

emphasizes inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking. Parents repeatedly state that the curriculum challenges their students. Inquiry and problem solving occur in class projects such as "Create 28," Fascist propaganda units, science labs, and math problem-solving activities. In order to pursue deeper understanding, students can contract with individual teachers for honors credit. Students are instructed in the multiple facets of technology use through the nine themes of digital citizenship curriculum used in computer education classes throughout the district, and students are required to sign the school's acceptable use policy document. While the use of technology is evident in student work, most student use of technology appears to be limited to traditional tasks. The administration supports a schedule that allows team-based planning through grade 10, thereby facilitating the development of cross-disciplinary projects. This learning is evident through collaborative units such as A Long Way Gone (social studies and English) and a Model UN Project (social studies and math). There are also identified school competencies that cut across disciplines, incentivizing collaborative approaches. However, there is little evidence of cross-disciplinary learning at the 11th and 12th grade levels. While there are opportunities for students to engage in authentic learning experiences outside the school, avenues for students to pursue extended learning such as internships, job shadows, and outside mentoring opportunities are limited. As the curriculum continues to promote inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking skills and when the curriculum consistently identifies applications for cross-disciplinary learning, provides for extended learning opportunities for students in and around the greater community to insure authentic learning, and broadens the use of technology to include more innovative applications, all students will be ensured the curriculum provides opportunities for authentic learning. (student shadowing, teacher interviews, self-study, Endicott survey, curriculum guides)

There is clear alignment between written and taught curriculum. The school has implemented the *FEI* model to ensure that instructional practices and the written curriculum are consistent. The unit and lesson plans clearly articulate the instructional strategies to be used in the delivery of the competencies and content described in a given unit of study. Learning goals and instructional strategies are regularly written on classroom white boards. The majority of teachers address those during the launch portion of the lesson. At the beginning of the *FEI* process, administrators and the *FEI* consultant regularly collected lesson and unit plans in order to provide feedback to teachers. A yearly personal reflection on curriculum is part of the teacher evaluation plan. Validation of this alignment, however, is not limited to teacher reflection. The *FEI* consultant continues to provide planning and classroom observations and feedback on lesson plans and units. These observations are often triangulated with the goals of administrative observations, which include five to ten walk-through evaluations per year as well as formal evaluations. Teachers report that administrators' feedback on walk-throughs and formal evaluations regularly links their observations to the written curriculum. Continued alignment of the written and taught curriculum with added emphasis on the intentional integration of the 21st century learning expectations will improve students' practice and achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. (teacher interviews, student shadowing, curriculum guides)

Curricular coordination and vertical articulation exists to a limited extent between and among most academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district. While the school has done an admirable job of coordinating the curriculum within each grade level through grade 10, evidence of vertical articulation is minimal, and 11th and 12th grade teachers are not afforded common planning time, resulting in minimal opportunities for grade specific collaboration. School curriculum documents include detailed unit plans for each course but do not include K through 12 scope and sequence documents for the various areas of the curriculum. The district has adopted the "Math in Focus" curriculum for kindergarten through grade 8, ensuring vertical articulation in mathematics through eighth grade. Scope and sequence documents do exist for core curriculum K through 5. In some

areas, there is only one teacher for the entire subject area (French, for example) thus ensuring vertical articulation. At present, the superintendent has assumed responsibility for the supervision of the curriculum because there is no curriculum coordinator position. The district relies on outside consultants for input on content area curriculum development. The *FEI* consultant continues to support and train teachers in the implementation and use of that initiative. At this time, there does not appear to be a plan to hire a curriculum coordinator for the district. Increased and more effective coordination between and among all academic areas within the school and with the sending schools within the district will result in a stronger curricular progression so that all students will be prepared to practice and achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (self-study, superintendent, teacher interviews)

Epping Middle and High School staffing levels, instructional materials and supplies are sufficient; however, technology, equipment, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center have some limitations to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities. Staffing is sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, however, teachers report that the curriculum could be augmented to include more elective offerings in the high school. Likewise, both teachers and administrators have expressed the need for extended staffing hours for the library/media center. Epping has designated one high school guidance counselor as the coordinator for extended learning opportunities. Class sizes are optimal, with average class sizes in the low twenties in the middle school and many classes well under twenty in the high school. In addition, classroom teachers are supported by a large number of paraprofessionals, with as many as three paraprofessionals in some middle school classrooms.

Data from the Endicott Survey shows that 75 percent of the staff agree that the school has sufficient instructional materials to implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities. Epping Middle and High School offers students a large variety of co-curricular opportunities, ranging from service organizations to sports teams, including both clubs and sports teams that support inclusion of all students. Students who participate in the football program pay a fee; all other athletic and co-curricular programs are funded by the school and miscellaneous fundraisers. With respect to instructional materials, 87 percent of parents feel that their children have been provided with the materials needed for each class (e.g., computers, textbooks, supplies). Likewise, 87 percent of the students agree that their school provides them with the instructional materials they need for each of their subjects and teachers report having adequate supplies and textbooks. While the library/ media center reports sufficient financial support, students report having difficulty accessing these services during and after the school day, and teachers would like to see the collection updated. The library does subscribe to a number of databases to support the curriculum. The recent addition of a separate middle school facility and renovation of the high school ensures more than adequate space for classrooms, science labs, computer labs, and the media center. In the middle school, the pod configuration supports the team approach to learning and in the high school teachers have their own classrooms. However, the lack of an auditorium leads to the occasional displacement of middle school physical education classes and there is no dedicated office space for the middle school physical education teacher. Moreover, the high school physical education teacher has noted some difficulty in the acquisition/ replacement of cardio equipment in order to support the curriculum. Finally, HVAC issues in the renovated high school are uneven and result in temperature variations that impact comfort levels in certain areas of the building. While some teachers feel that access to technology is adequate, more varied technology as well as additional professional development opportunities are needed to better integrate technology into the curriculum. When access to technology, equipment, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities, then students will have increased opportunities to practice and achieve the school's 21st

century learning expectations. (self-study, school support staff, teacher interviews, Endicott survey, panel presentation)

The district has begun the process of providing the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, education, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research. The superintendent and building principals are responsible for the supervision of curriculum in the absence of a curriculum coordinator. The school district does use outside consultants to support curriculum development in the content areas and to support the *FEI* initiative. The school district provides eleven to thirteen days of professional development to their staff. Teachers are required to reflect on their curriculum as part of their annual evaluation. However, there is no formal mechanism to review and evaluate the curriculum as a whole. With respect to funding, an average of $152,300 per year over the last three years has been allocated to curriculum, instruction, and assessment initiatives. Additional funds are spent to provide teachers and administrators with individually selected courses and/ or workshops. The district leadership team (DLT) has reviewed current research such as *Understanding by Design*, Wiggins and McTighe and *Curriculum 21* by Hayes Jacobs. To some extent, curriculum is revised based on research and performance data. Examples include the reading intervention program in the middle school, the adoption of "Math in Focus" K through 8, and other changes to the program of studies resulting from data collected through NECAP, NWEA and STAR assessments. There is, however, no regular or formal process for the review and revision of curriculum. The district is participating in the ground-breaking Performance Assessment for Competency Education project (PACE) in concert with neighboring school districts. Feedback from this pilot program is being used to modify curriculum in some areas and improve instruction. An increase in personnel, time, and financial resources will facilitate the collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum that will help students achieve the school's learning expectations. (superintendent, budget documents, self-study, teacher interviews)

Commendations:

1. The clear articulation of the 21st century learning expectations and course competencies across all curricular areas
2. The commitment of the school to use of a common curricular format for syllabi, lesson, and unit plans
3. The development of rubrics related to the 21st century learning expectations
4. The support of team-based planning time to facilitate cross-disciplinary planning and teaching through grade 10
5. The variety and depth of learning experiences provided to students during the school day
6. The implementation and continued support of formal curriculum models
7. The numerous targeted walk-through observations by administrators
8. The effective horizontal articulation of curriculum in grades 6 through 10
9. The number of co-curricular activities available to students
10. The school district's participation in the PACE assessment project

Recommendations:

1. Maintain the level of funding necessary to sustain research-based curriculum development

2. Develop and refine essential questions within lessons and units to promote inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking
3. Complete the implementation and integration of school-wide analytic rubrics
4. Establish and implement a formal review process for the evaluation and revision of the curriculum
5. Increase the opportunities for students to engage in extended learning opportunities
6. Provide opportunities for cross-disciplinary planning and vertical articulation at the 11th and 12th grade levels
7. Provide more opportunities to develop departmental vertical articulation of the curriculum
8. Develop and implement a plan to provide additional technology resources as well as the professional development necessary to effectively use them
9. Assess instructional equipment needs specifically related to fitness equipment and technology to ensure curriculum programs are sufficiently funded and supported
10. Assess continuing space constraints, specifically the shared gym space and stage, in order to address the impact of these constraints on the delivery of curriculum

3   **Instruction**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusions

Teachers' instructional practices are often examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. According to the Epping Middle and High School mission statement, the community, "educates and empowers students within a safe environment to become "respectful, involved, and knowledgeable 21st century learners and citizens" through the application of their guiding principles. Teacher rubrics and checklists often reflect the focus found in the school-wide rubrics. Administrators examine and provide feedback on teacher instructional practices through lesson and unit plan review, specifically focusing on higher order thinking skills (HOTS), visual cues, modeling, progress monitoring, guided practice, questioning, engagement, summarization, formative and summative assessments, rubrics, and teacher feedback. Teachers receive written commendations on their instruction; for example, one teacher was "commended for extremely explicit teaching style. She nicely blends the art and science of teaching." Teachers collaborate with and reflect upon their instructional practices with the *Framework for Effective Instruction (FEI)* consultant who has been working with the high school for eight years and with the middle school since 2011. Through the *FEI* school-wide professional development, teachers have consistently used a lesson plan template which support their students in meeting the community's learning expectations and competencies. Teachers are expected to examine their instructional practices with their peers during their designated daily 45-minute team time. The Endicott survey indicates that both staff (79.6 percent) and parents (67.1 percent) believe that the middle and high school use instructional practices that reflect the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. Continuously and deliberately examining instructional practices using the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations will increase students' opportunities to achieve these learning goals. (lesson plans, unit plans, teacher evaluations, self-study, Endicott survey, student shadowing, classroom observations)

The extensive emphasis on 21st century skills across the school, specifically teachers' focus on personalized instruction, engaging students as active learners, emphasis on inquiry, problem solving, higher order thinking, and assignment of authentic tasks, supports student achievement of the 21st century learning expectations; however, cross-disciplinary learning, student self-assessment, and integration of technology are inconsistently exercised. Many teachers personalize instruction using both differentiation in terms of shifting expectations depending on students' assessed capabilities and the incorporation of academic choice into assignments. The social studies teachers, in particular, give students significant latitude to focus on topics of their choice for classwork and assessment. Cross-disciplinary learning is present at both the high school and middle school levels, especially between the English, science, and math departments. However, evidence is not present to indicate a cross-disciplinary focus across all departments and in all teachers' practice, particularly at the upperclassmen high school level. The vast majority of summative project-based assessments engage students as independent learners, and evidence indicates that many classroom experiences are deliberately designed by teachers to make students active, engaged, and independent in the learning process. Inquiry-based learning, problem solving, and higher order thinking tasks are pervasive in all departments, in both their instructional practice and in their assessments of student learning. Projects across the school demonstrate this commitment to HOTS (i.e., the Create-28 cross-curricular project in 8th grade English and US History that asks students to draft a 28th Amendment; the summative project-based assessment in Gender Studies; and the career planning writing project in 6th grade English). Lesson plans and observations also serve as evidence that most teachers have a focus on HOTS, inquiry, and problem solving. Students are frequently asked to apply their skills and knowledge to authentic tasks, and students take pleasure in their learning and believe the experiences they have in the classroom are preparing them for their futures in high school, college, and the real world. Students report that they are

occasionally asked to engage in self-assessment, and evidence indicates that in some areas, summative assessments incorporate formative assessments and student self-assessment, especially in the case of project-based assessments and through the use of exit tickets/journals. In some areas, technology is often incorporated into students' learning, particularly in math through the IXL program and science through data collection with Logger Pro in labs, while in English and social studies technology use is limited to research and typing for projects. The shortage of computers makes technology integration problematic, and teachers report difficulties securing computers for lessons due to limited supply of hardware and demand among their peers. However, the Endicott survey indicates general satisfaction with the use of technology, with 68.4 percent of student respondents saying their teachers ask them to use technology in their assignments. When instructional strategies are more frequently designed to engage students in cross-disciplinary learning, self-assessment and integrated technology, students will be even more effectively supported in their achievement of each of Epping Middle and high School's 21st century learning expectations. (classroom observations, teacher interviews, Endicott survey, curriculum guides, students)

Although most teachers adjust instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by using formative assessments, especially during instructional time, and by strategically differentiating, purposefully organizing group learning activities, and providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom to meet student needs, this practice is not uniform throughout the school. According to the self-study, teachers provide at least "six formative assessments per quarter," in alignment with the school-wide policy. Within a sixth grade classroom, a teacher frequently monitors student writing through the development of individual goals during regular conferencing. During a dialogue activity in a French classroom, students demonstrated conversational dialogue and the teacher modeled, provided constructive feedback, and encouraged students to try again during his lesson. Teachers regularly receive formative feedback from students through the use of writing, be it journaling, written assignments, class discussions, or exit tickets; this feedback informs the teacher of the instructional needs necessary to support student success. Both middle school teachers and high school teachers differentiate skills and content to best meet the learning needs and interests of their students. This is demonstrated in the assignment designs, as well as in the lesson planning. Conferencing and small group instruction with students, as demonstrated by several teachers, permits skill differentiation while content differentiation can be found in lesson plans and assignment documents. Several teachers report adjusting learning expectations for students depending on their abilities and needs. In addition, students have the opportunity to seek support or re-instruction in a competency that they did not demonstrate proficiency in during the initial summative assessment. Teachers meet with the student and collaborate on the learning strategy necessary to successfully complete the summative assessment, prior to reassessment. In recent years, some teachers from Epping Middle and high School experienced professional development on differentiation provided by a consultant to ensure application in the classroom. Although teachers demonstrate purposefully organized group learning activities in their instructional planning, for example "fishbowl" discussions in 11th grade English classes, there is little evidence of teachers adjusting their instructional practices through purposefully organized group learning activities to meet student needs. As noted in the self-study, the Endicott survey indicates that only 65.3 percent of the staff perceives that "teachers adjust their instructional practices by organizing group learning activities." From grades six to ten, students are provided additional instructional support beyond their classrooms through the integration of freshman and sophomore seminar courses at the high school level and the Research, Remediate, and Reteach (RRR) period and Response to Intervention (RtI) supports at the middle school level. Within the classroom, some classes have additional assistance from special educators and paraprofessionals. Teachers provide additional support and alternative strategies when conferencing

with students. Evidence exists that assignments incorporate alternative methods of demonstrating learning for students. However, it was noted that most teachers provide additional support beyond the classroom instruction in scheduled periods of time during or after school. When teachers continue to use formative assessments to adjust instructional practices, continue to strategically differentiate depending on student needs, provide clearly defined support and alternative strategies in the classroom, and more purposefully organize group learning activities, the needs of each student will be met. (student shadowing, Instruction Standard Committee, Endicott survey, grade level team meeting, self-study, lesson plans)

Most teachers, both individually and collaboratively, examine current research and engage in professional discourse around instructional practice. Teachers in some areas deliberately examine student work and use this achievement data to improve instructional practices; however, only supervisor feedback is frequently used to inform instructional practices, with feedback from students, other teachers, and parents incorporated rarely. The implementation of the *Framework for Effective Instruction (FEI)* since 2008 at the high school and 2011 at the middle school has created a school-wide culture, centered around plentiful professional development, that focuses on incorporating research-based best practices into teachers' instructional strategies. The school has in place many professional days, faculty meetings, department meetings, school-specific meetings, and leadership meetings over the course of the year in which the primary focus has been on using *FEI* to inform instruction, as well as to develop teacher self-reflection on instruction. This focus has shifted in the last year, however, as the school prepared for the integrated Performance Assessment for Competency Education (PACE) and the NEASC site visit, both of which have dominated more of the faculty's professional development. There is evidence that *FEI* learning strategies are used in curriculum development, as reflected in formal lesson plans submitted for administrative review. One-on-one meetings between the *FEI* consultant and teachers, as well as the aforementioned large group meetings, indicate that teachers are exposed to *FEI* principles both individually and in group activities. Evidence exists that some teachers use formative and summative assessments to give feedback and adjust instruction; however, there is limited evidence that this process is present across the school, but is rather a reflection of individual teacher initiative. At the middle school level, the three times yearly administration of the STAR test does affect student placement into Research, Remediate, and Reteach (RRR) periods and the Response to Intervention (RtI) process, but this practice falls off in the high school. The lack of grade level teams beyond the 10th grade and the cross-curricular focus of the existing grade level teams mean that teachers operate in their content area largely in a vacuum, limiting opportunities to explore content-specific shifts in instructional strategies through peer feedback. Their administrative supervisors only observe teachers regularly, with teachers reporting five-to-ten informal observations and one formal observation a year. As mentioned above, administrators historically gave weekly feedback on lesson plans, although this practice has given way to administrative evaluation of unit plans in the past two years. Teachers have far fewer opportunities to receive feedback from their colleagues, since peer observations are nonexistent and teachers are the sole expert in their content area on their grade level teams. Teachers do report that they informally gather student feedback, but there is no evidence that they incorporate this feedback into their instructional practice. There is minimal evidence teachers gather or incorporate feedback from parents, and parents in fact reported to the committee that they feel there are few, if any, lines of communication between them and teachers through which they can express broad concerns or make specific recommendations. Teachers will improve their instructional practice when educators continue to work, individually and collaboratively, to examine current research and use that research to foster discourse around instructional practices; increase the quantity feedback they receive from their colleagues, students, and parents to compliment the feedback they receive from their supervisors; and increase their

sensitivity to data concerning student achievement in adjusting their instructional practices. (classroom observations, teacher interviews, parents, self-study, central office administrators, *FEI* handbook)

Almost all teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area, though fewer teachers have opportunities to develop content-specific instructional practices. The Endicott survey indicates that students, teachers, and parents are in agreement that educators at the middle and high schools are experts in their content areas, with 88.4 percent, 83.7 percent, and 85.2 percent of respondents, respectively, agreeing that teachers are knowledgeable in the subjects they teach. Additionally, lesson plans reflect rigorous and thoughtful adherence to content-specific competencies and a general focus on content-specific pedagogy. Further, teachers across the school demonstrate depth of knowledge in classroom observations. Teachers in grades nine through twelve meet bi-monthly with either the humanities department or the math and science departments; however, time for discipline-specific instructional reflection is limited to portions of some bi-monthly faculty meetings and some times during professional development days. Teachers from grades six through eight have daily opportunities to collaborate with grade-level peers; however, they lack regularly scheduled opportunities to collaborate with their cross-grade content counterparts on content-specific instructional practices. Time is provided for these discussions sometimes during monthly faculty meetings and four professional development days each year. One English teacher reports that she carpools with a colleague once a week specifically to discuss instructional practices specific to their content area. Currently, the focus during these PD sessions is on the PACE school-wide initiative, which includes the development of both formative and summative assessments. It is reported that the development of these assessments is shifting instructional practices to support student achievement. The library houses a small collection of professional literature and subscribes to educational journals including *Education Week*, *Teaching and Learning*, *Ed Leadership*, and *Teaching Tolerance*. Administrators provide access to additional educational publications from their own libraries. In addition, some teachers subscribe to content-specific professional journals and share relevant articles with their peers; however, this is not a practice across all disciplines. It is not evident that teachers regularly participate in content-specific professional development opportunities to improve their instruction. However, the professional development provided by the district in *FEI* and PACE has resulted in improved instructional practices. Teacher reflections are evident on unit and lesson plans. They also compose an annual reflection that addresses their goals and practices. The feedback provided to teachers on these documents come from administrators, the *FEI* consultant, and members of the professional development committee. The *FEI* consultant, who has a humanities focus, as well as an addition math consultant are at both the middle school and the high school at least once a month to workshop with groups and individual teachers. The self-study reports that professional development goals are more focused on general topics, and that staff content and content-specific instructional practice expertise may be a result of outside investment on the part of teachers, as opposed to predetermined, school-guided effort among colleagues. Individual teachers rather than departments collect classroom content-specific materials. Teachers are reflective practitioners and maintain expertise in their content and instruction. (annual reflection form, principals, department coordinators, librarian, Endicott survey, teacher interviews)

Commendations:

1. The work teachers have done with the *FEI* consultant that has helped ensure teacher instructional practices are continuously examined
2. The focus on assigning authentic tasks that encourage active student engagement
3. The teachers' use of differentiation in their instructional practices
4. The extensive use of formative assessments that help inform teacher instruction

5. The consistent implementation of effective instructional practices
6. The annual reflections completed by teachers to encourage self-assessment of instructional practices
7. The process of support and feedback provided by administrators and other experts which helps teachers reflect on their instructional practices

Recommendations:

1. Provide professional development for teachers in the integration of technology into instructional practices
2. Increase availability of technology resources for students
3. Increase the emphasis on cross-disciplinary learning in the 11th and 12th grades
4. Ensure teachers adjust their instructional practices by providing additional support and differentiated instructional strategies within the regular classroom
5. Institute formal opportunities for peer observation and feedback among teachers within and between the content areas ranging from grades 6 through 12
6. Establish formal channels of communication to solicit feedback from parents and students to improve instructional practices
7. Provide regular and formal opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively and reflectively with their grades 6 through 12 content-specific peers on their instructional practices

4   Assessment of and for Student Learning

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

1. The professional staff continuously employs a formal process, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

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

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

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

5. Prior to summative assessments, teachers provide students with the corresponding rubrics.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusions

Epping Middle and High School has developed a formal process to assess student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations based on school-wide rubrics, but does not yet have a process to assess whole-school progress. The 21st century skills are defined on the high school's website under "Grading and Reporting" and the "21st Century Skills Rubrics" are available on an inconsistent basis in the high school; the school reports that a copy is given to all high school students at the beginning of the year. High school teachers consistently indicate on their unit plan template which learning expectations will be addressed during the unit. Each high school staff member is currently in the process of individually filling in unit competency maps. This spreadsheet lists the units they teach along with the content competencies of their discipline and the eight school-wide skill competencies (e.g., the "21st century learning skills"). They are to indicate with an "x" the units in which they assess each of the competencies. The principal collects these spreadsheets. Every high school teacher is expected to cover each of the eight school-wide skills at some point and each teacher enters at least one score on every student's report card for the 21st century skills. The principal exports this data from PowerSchool to spreadsheets, which he shares widely. In the high school, the process of formative and summative assessment of students on the content competencies is noteworthy. The Epping High School Essay Writing Rubric and the school-wide analytic rubrics are not widely used. In the middle school, teachers give each student a quarterly Work Habits/Effort score of 1-4 (unsatisfactory to outstanding) on the report card. The Work Habits/Effort Rubric is available in the student/parent handbook, of which there is a hard copy and a link on the middle school's website. The middle school plans to report 21st century learning skills on progress reports and report cards in the future. When the professional staff use a consistent and formal process, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess student and whole-school progress, they will have a better understanding of the degree to which students are achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. (teachers, students, principal, school board, middle school handbook, school's website, self-study)

The school's professional staff communicates individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their parents but does not yet have a process to communicate the school's progress in achieving these goals. Individual student scores in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations are reported to students and their families regularly in the high school through PowerSchool and the quarterly report card. The school's overall progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations will be reported on the District Report Card each year. Individual student scores are recorded as a 1 – 4; 1 indicating "not yet competent," 2 indicating "competent," 3 indicating "beyond competent," and 4 indicating "advanced." Parents and students have open access to the learners' grades entered by the teachers in PowerSchool in addition to the quarterly report card (mailed to parents), and the teachers mail PowerSchool-generated progress reports at the midpoint of each quarter. The school does not have a process to access, or an identified time where it shares, whole-school achievement of the 21st century learning expectations. The Epping School District Report Card, posted annually on the website, shares the successes and challenges in meeting the student learning, professional learning, and accountability goals. It addresses demographic, educational (e.g., committee focuses, reading and math proficiency scores on standardized tests, post secondary plans) and financial (e.g., per pupil cost and tax rate) data. As opportunities for collecting and communicating data specifically related to school-wide expectations are realized, the awareness of the student growth toward becoming 21st century learners will increase throughout the community. (student report card, school's website, students, teachers, guidance counselors)

Teachers frequently collect, aggregate, and analyze a range and variety of data and results and in some cases use it to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. Data is infrequently disaggregated. The superintendent regularly shares aggregate data on grade and building data, standardized testing data (including SAT/PSAT/AP tests and NWEA/NECAP in 2013), course competency-based data, and achievement by socioeconomic level and with the special education population. The school board looks at benchmarks and trends in aggregated math and language arts data and strives to form leading questions to address weaknesses. Staffing and curriculum changes have been implemented based on these discussions supported by needs identified by building principals. For example, because of low standardized math scores, an entirely new math curriculum and method of instruction was implemented and a math specialist was hired. Individual student weaknesses are extensively discussed and addressed. The high school principal and the pupil assistance team (PAT) closely follow data on academics and progress on competencies, pass/fail rates of summative assessments and reassessments and discipline reports. The STAR test (a computer assessment tool for English and math) is given three times a year (fall, winter, spring). High school teachers pay particular attention to those students who score in the lower percentiles. In the middle school, STAR scores determine a student's focus during the RRR (Research, Remediate, Reteach) daily period. By implementing a formalized process that collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data, Epping will ensure that student achievement inequalities are identified. (school board, principal, teachers)

Teachers deliberately communicate to students the applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed prior to each unit of study and typically prior to each lesson. By design, the teachers also communicate to the student the formative and summative assessments that will be used in each unit. Through their extensive work on the *Framework for Effective Instruction*, teachers are developing the habit of clearly defining content objectives, language objectives and strategy-use objectives for the unit and lesson. There is a school-wide rubric for lesson/unit preparation included in the *FEI* Handbook. The competencies being addressed are a key component of the unit plan and lesson plan templates that are used consistently throughout the school. The templates include a checklist of the 21st century learning skills. The clearly communicated unit-specific goals and 21st century learning expectations that are provided to students prior to each unit of study and lesson affords each student a clear understanding of what he or she will be learning and how he or she will be assessed. (students, teachers, classroom observations, unit plans, *FEI* Handbook)

Teachers provide corresponding rubrics that are thoughtful and clear prior to the majority of summative assessments. The use of course-specific rubrics for projects and essays is prevalent in the high school and common in the middle school. The rubrics are presented and explained prior to assigned tasks and are used for assessing the tasks. Students and parents, consistently report that they have a clear understanding of how assignments are assessed and what level of accomplishment is expected to successfully meet the course-specific learning expectations. The pervasive use of course-specific rubrics gives learners a strong understanding of what is expected of them and helps to guide them through the summative assessments successfully. (students, parents, classroom observations, student work, course specific rubrics)

In each unit of study, teachers employ a range of informal and formal assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments. Teachers make use of informal formative assessments, including questioning, discussion and observation, to determine student learning during lesson launch and delivery. Students are sometimes provided opportunities to assess their own, and peer, understanding.   A broad range of formal formative and summative assessments are employed to measure students' competency in each class. These include presentations, projects, essays, homework,

quizzes, tests and performance-based assessments. A formal reassessment policy is in place that allows students to revisit their understanding of content competencies and retake summative assessments. The employment of a wide range of assessment strategies provides all students with several opportunities to develop and demonstrate their content area competencies. (student work, students, self-study, teacher interviews, classroom observations)

Teachers sometimes collaborate in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, and on common assessments most notably within the PACE pilot project.   District-wide professional development efforts in recent years have focused significantly on the creation of robust formal assessments aligned with course competencies. At the high school, department meetings provide time that is on occasion used for content area teachers to work together in the review and revision of assessments. There are no apparent formal opportunities for middle school content area teachers to meet, share, review, reflect or revise assessments. Through the Performance Assessment for Competency Education project (PACE), representative teachers of mathematics, science, humanities and special education are collaborating with their peers in other school districts to develop high quality performance assessments. This project has allowed rich opportunities for content area teachers to work together in horizontal and vertical teams to develop rigorous performance-based assessments and will provide further opportunities for content area teachers to collaborate in the review, reflection upon, and revision of those assessments. Time is scheduled for cross-curriculum teaching teams to formally meet during the day, (40 minutes at middle school, 55 minutes in grades 9 and 10) teachers report that those times are most frequently used to collaborate on individual student concerns and are not formally dedicated to the sharing and revision of assessments. Also, one professional development day was partially devoted (105 minutes) to vertical discussion (across grades 6 through12). The scope of summative assessments was one of four topics to discuss. The provision of regular, formal, and purposeful opportunities for teachers to collaborate in the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments within content areas will improve overall student performance throughout the content areas. (Endicott survey, self-study, department leaders, teacher interviews, principal, professional development agenda 1/16/15, proposal for ELA/SS curriculum mapping 3/19 to 5/29)

Teachers often provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work. Throughout the learning process, teachers provide feedback to students on scaffold activities and written drafts in order to assist student in the creation of a final product.   Evidence also indicates that all teachers follow the formal policy of providing at least two formative assessments prior to giving a summative assessment. Feedback on these assessments may be in the form of student conference, written corrections, commentary or notations, and are designed to assist the student in preparing to participate in a summative assessment. Furthermore, the formal reassessment policy in both schools allows a student to review teacher feedback and to develop a plan of relearning and reassessing. Of students surveyed, 74.5 percent agrees that their teachers provide assessments results in a reasonable amount of time, and 78.6 percent agrees that their teachers provide corrective feedback to help them improve their work. Over 72 percent of parents surveyed agree that their children's teachers provides timely and corrective feedback to assist him/her in revising and improving assignments. The formal and consistent policy on providing specific assessment feedback to students allows students across all disciplines the opportunity to revise and improve their work, thereby improving their proficiency on course-specific learning targets. (Endicott survey, students, classroom observations, student handbook, teacher interviews, self-study)

Teachers regularly use informal formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning. These practices are embedded in classroom activities as teachers redirect, clarify and reteach individual or groups of students based on observation, questioning and dip sticking. Many teachers use launch activities to assess prerequisite skills prior to beginning a lesson or unit and adjust lesson pace and content based on the immediate results of the launch activity. Teachers may model additional tasks, clarify misunderstandings, reteach skills, and provide additional practice opportunities as part of their adjustments to the lesson pace. Furthermore, teachers use the results of formative assessments to determine whole-class readiness to participate in a summative assessment and may reteach or re-clarify concepts based on those results. The regular use of informal formative assessment to inform instruction results in improved student learning. (classroom observations, students, teacher interviews, self-study, school support staff, Endicott survey)

Teachers and administrators, individually and sometimes collaboratively, examine a limited range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice. Both the high school and middle school principals collect data regarding core competency achievement, grades on course summative assessments (including frequency of reassessment and success rate of reassessment) and scores on grade-level assessments (STAR math and reading). At the high school this data is combined, compared, and shared with the instructional staff at faculty, team, and departmental meetings with the purpose of identifying trends in overall and individual student achievement. It is reported that review of this data, by groups and individual teachers, have initiated conversations around curriculum and instructional improvement and is used to identify support services and intervention strategies for low achieving students. This data is a key factor to determining if a student would benefit from enrollment in foundational or tutorial classes in mathematics or English language arts. The principal and individual teachers also use individual student data when conferencing with parents regarding individual student achievement. At the middle school, STAR and quarterly competency data is reviewed by the principal, special education director and assistant principal and shared with teaching teams to form quarterly RRR student rosters and identify students who have a common need or who will benefit from enrollment in an RtI reading course. The analysis of data has resulted in the adoption of a new math curriculum and illustrated the need for a full-time reading specialist. STAR is also used to validate instructional practices and curriculum. Reassessment frequency, success rate and student work are used by teachers, in teams and individually, to validate instructional practices and unit plans. Data is used by the guidance department to determine course placement for incoming students and identifies which curriculum an individual student needs to access and which, if any, support services should be provided to the student. There is no formal process of collecting data from post-secondary institutions or of surveying current students and alumni, however data is available to consider from the Endicott survey results and Naviance. Broadening the range of evidence of student learning by incorporating student work and common assessments, progress on the 21st century learning expectations, and survey data from students and alumni will provide greater insight for revising curriculum and improving instructional practice. (principal, guidance counselors, teacher interviews, high school performance spreadsheet, , proposal for ELA/SS curriculum vertical teaming, EMS professional development day agenda 1/16/15)

Grading and reporting practices are reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. There has been an extensive focus on reviewing and revising grading and reporting practices in order to move to competency-based assessment and reporting. In addition to progress on course competencies, the high school's PowerSchool program and report cards were specifically redesigned to report on the eight 21st century learning skills, which were built on the school's core values and beliefs. The district has very specific, research-based Grading, Reporting, and Recognition System Guidelines. The high school also publishes Grading and Reporting Student

Achievement. Grades 6-8 have spelled out additional Grading Guidelines that outline the grading policies on frequency and timing. In 2013, Middle School Grading Parent Forums established guidelines to create consistency for reporting student learning. The high school staff does not appear to discuss their guidelines or practices to assure consistency across subject areas and by all teachers. For example, decisions about how to move from a scored rubric to a percentage score are made on an individual basis. The high school policy does mandate that formative assessments will account for ten percent of the learners' grades and summative assessments, 90 percent of the learners' grades. It is perceived that students sometimes forego the formative assessments because they do not understand their importance. When all teachers use consistent language as they regularly review and revise grading and reporting practices to align with each other and with the school's core values and beliefs about learning, students will understand the connection between the grades they earn and the 21st century learning expectations. (student report card, middle school publications, school's website, teachers, students)

Commendations:

1. The high school report card that is specifically designed to include multiple measures of performance for each student
2. The school's involvement in the USDOE approved Performance Assessment for Competency Education (PACE) Pilot as one of only four districts in the country, "to pilot a new locally managed assessment process for accountability purposes"
3. The thoughtful and clear course-specific rubrics and school-wide rubrics for eight 21st century learning expectations
4. The focus on improving individual student achievement through the analysis of a variety of data
5. The extensive work with research-based practices in effective instruction
6. The pervasive practice among teachers of clarifying learning goals and assessment tools during planning and prior to beginning each lesson
7. The demonstration of a wide range of assessment strategies including performance-based assessments
8. The development of performance-based, competency-aligned summative assessments
9. The widespread, consistent implementation of the school's re-assessment policy
10. The corrective feedback in the form of formative assessments directly related to summative assessment
11. The frequent checking for understanding in the classroom to meet individual student needs
12. The school policies that provide for a balanced use of formative and summative assessments
13. The education of stakeholders around formative and summative assessments and competency-based assessment

Recommendations:

1. Develop a formal process to assess and report whole-school progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations based on school-wide rubrics
2. Embed the school's skill competencies across the curriculum and explicitly teach students how they apply to their learning
3. Ensure that each student has regular opportunities to be assessed in both formative and summative ways on each of the 21st century learning expectations

4. Implement the plan to reflect learner progress on the 21st century learning expectations on the middle school report card
5. Consistently disaggregate data to identify and address student achievement inequalities
6. Review and discuss student work and assessments to identify and address inequities
7. Provide more opportunities for self-assessment of student work
8. Provide formal, purposeful time for content area teachers to meet as vertical teams to share student products, receive feedback on, and revise summative assessments
9. Use student work, common assessments, progress on the 21st century learning expectations, and survey data from students and alumni to revise curriculum and improve instructional practice
10. Evaluate how the school's core values and beliefs are reflected in grading and reporting practices
11. Ensure that grading practices are consistent across subject areas and by all teachers

SUPPORT STANDARDS

SCHOOL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

5 School Culture and Leadership

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusions

The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all. Evidence abounds to support the efforts of the Epping Middle and High School to create a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture. From several sources, there was a pervasive feeling that because of the moderate size of the schools, students and staff are able to develop a close working relationship that favors strong communication and high learning expectations. The cooperative relationship between students and teachers is illustrated in the Endicott survey with 66 percent of students agreeing that teachers respect students and over 50 percent agreeing that students respect teachers. Regarding safety, the Endicott survey reports over 77 percent of the students feel safe at school; over 79 percent of the staff reports the school's culture is safe, positive, and supportive, and over 80 percent of parents report the school provides a safe, positive, respectful and supportive school culture. A newly developed discipline procedure flow chart has provided staff with a definitive process to use to ensure the consistent handling of infractions of rules, and a new internal school suspension program was initiated in 2011. Discipline data provided shows a decline in average referrals per day from 800 incidents in 2011-2012 to 626 incidents in 2012-2013 to 122 incidents in 2013-2014. A district-wide initiative was implemented in 2012, offering the Olweus Bullying Prevention program, allowing better awareness and communication surrounding bullying behavior and students' reactions to it. The number of clubs, organizations, and extracurricular activities are impressive at Epping Middle and high Schools. There are twenty-two documented clubs and organizations. Most impressive are the organizations that promote student leadership opportunities, such as student government and student leadership team. The athletic program, according to the School Culture and Leadership Standard subcommittee members, is a source of pride and inspiration for the school. There are a total of ten teams that compete yearly in a variety of sports in Epping Middle School and seventeen in Epping High School. A newly developed "Life as a Blue Devil" initiative at the high school is underway. The motto for this effort is, "We are all one - support and respect all Blue Devils." Since stakeholders and leadership within the school community create a positive culture of respect and shared responsibility for learning, it results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all students. (self-study, discipline procedure flow chart, discipline report, program of studies, teachers, school support staff, students)

By design, the school is equitable, inclusive, and fosters heterogeneity where every student over the course of the high school experience is enrolled in a minimum of one, and often times more, heterogeneously grouped core course. Epping Middle and High School ascribes to a model of inclusion for every student. A manifestation of their attitude on inclusion rests in the success of their unified sports team. According to interviews with a building special education coordinator and a high school guidance counselor, all high school students are enrolled in at least one heterogeneously grouped course and the building is fully inclusive of students with disabilities. For example, in grade nine, biology and civics are heterogeneously grouped, as are world cultures and physical science in grade ten. Upon review of the program of studies, classes are not identified as heterogeneous. Continued offering of opportunities for students to enroll and to be engaged in heterogeneously grouped courses fosters an equitable and inclusive environment. (self-study, program of studies, teacher interviews)

There is a developing but formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. According to the self-study and students, the school has a formal program in grades 6 through 12 that connects each student with an adult member of the school community in addition to the counselor. In the middle school and in grades 9 through 10, the

frequency of student/teacher contact is daily whereas in the high school contact is required bi-monthly (grades 11 and 12 students with earned privileges can opt out of advisory except for mandatory meetings every few weeks). Middle school teachers report great success with the morning meeting program, but there is less consensus among high school teachers, some of whom reported that the program for grades 11 and 12 is still a "work in progress," especially since it was only adopted in the 2014-2015 school year. According to the Endicott survey, only 47 percent of staff agrees that they "actively participate as an advisor/mentor in the school's formal program to personalize each student's educational experience." Only 43 percent of students agree with the statement. While a new, formal program exists to connect students with faculty at Epping High School, its effectiveness is limited because of the decreasing frequency with which upperclassmen meet with their advisors. (self-study, students, teacher interviews, Endicott survey)

In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff regularly engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning; often use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices; always dedicate formal time to implement professional development; and frequently apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.   The evidence of professional development in the form of professional discourse, the utilization of outside resources, and dedication of professional development time is strong.   Teachers engage in professional discourse during two monthly faculty meetings. The agendas clearly depicted opportunity for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning, although temporarily and partially usurped for the purpose of the NEASC self-study. Teachers also cited bi-monthly department meetings as an opportunity for professional discourse. Finally, grades six, seven, eight, nine, and ten have a daily common collaboration time during which they have the opportunity for professional discourse. Teachers reported that the time spent during the common collaboration time is not always structured to ensure time is spent on professional discourse, but rather spent on conversations regarding specific students.   Outside resources are also utilized to maintain currency with best practices. In teacher interviews, teachers reported having access to consultants in the areas of math and English language arts. There has been significant attention paid to the district-wide practice of the *Framework for Effective Instruction*, which according to several teachers has provided a common language among staff and a consistent structure from which teachers work to organize lessons, thus providing students with consistency from one class to another throughout the entire district. The master calendar verifies that there are eleven professional development days for all members of the faculty, as well as two days for individual teachers to use for specific needs. A collection of individual application for professional development forms were provided for documentation of individual opportunities. According to the master calendar, there is one day prior to the beginning of school designed to provide an orientation for new staff. There was no evidence of other strategies in place to assist in the induction of a newly hired teacher in order to provide adequate professional development prior or during a teacher's first year in the district.   While the school provides a robust professional development program and opportunity for professional discourse, an induction program, including mentoring, for newly hired teachers and daily common collaboration time for teachers of juniors and seniors will promote teachers' collegiality and will improve student learning.   (faculty meeting agendas, self-study, teacher interviews, master calendar, staff handbook)

School leaders regularly use a thoughtfully constructed research-based evaluation and supervision process that focuses on improved student learning. According to the Epping School District's website, the philosophy that is the foundation for the evaluation and supervision process is the, "belief in the potential of every school teacher and the district's dedication to provide timely evaluation feedback and professional development resources to improve the learning of both students and staff." The superintendent explained that the teacher evaluation model was developed after reviewing all state

requirements and conducting extensive research on various teacher evaluation models, including Kim Marshall and Charlotte Danielson, as well as the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC), a set of model standards for teachers that articulate a common knowledge and skill set that cuts across all subject areas and grade levels. A committee, comprised of one teacher from each of the elementary, middle, and high schools, along with a principal and the superintendent, participated in the thoughtful design of the teacher evaluation system. According to the Epping School District Teacher Evaluation Model, the evaluation system provides teachers with the opportunity for multiple, unannounced mini-observations with a post-observation conference and, in some cases, a full observation, including a pre- and post-observation conference. Most teachers are provided the opportunity for a summative evaluation conference. More frequent observations and conferences are required when a teacher is identified to be on an improvement plan. Both documented in the Epping School District Teacher Evaluation Model and verified through conversations with multiple teachers, all teachers undertake a self-assessment and goal setting process by September 30 of each school year. This self-assessment includes the analysis of student achievement data in combination with the use of the professional practice rubrics. The self-assessment is followed by the principal's assessment and a conversation that finalizes the goals each teacher determines for the school year. The district's effort to implement the *Framework for Effective Instruction* has provided the opportunity for the implementation of whole-school practices. Teachers are observed using the *Framework for Effective Instruction*, and according to an observation report shared by a teacher, the principal uses it to provide suggestions to the teacher for improvement in its implementation. The use of a thoughtfully constructed research-based supervision and evaluation system provides professional staff with the opportunity to grow within their profession by providing timely feedback focused on improving student learning. (school website, Epping School District Teacher Evaluation Model, teacher interviews, administrators)

The organization of time usually supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students. The adoption of the *FEI* curriculum framework and RTI model are widely cited throughout the building by teachers as research-based practices that inform their daily instruction to meet the needs of all students. In interviews, teachers wanted more time for professional collaboration both within and among academic departments. The self-study reports, "The current structure of time at Epping Middle and High School provides common planning time for teams among five grades (grades six through ten), in addition to every teacher's guaranteed forty-five minutes of preparation time per day." The self-study, as well as grades 11 and 12 teachers, reports the need for similar common collaboration time. The schedule is flexible, for example, the middle school utilizes a project block for student collaboration while the high school uses seminar, lunch study, and tutorials for reinforcement of skills; however, the self-study cites as a need, "increased flexibility in the creation of student schedules for those who want to take advantage of a wide variety of education choices." Time is organized at Epping Middle /High School in a flexible way that allows many teachers time to engage in professional discourse and to employ research-based instruction models for the benefit of many diverse learners. When all teachers on the high school level are afforded more time to collaborate with colleagues during the regular school day, they will be better able to strengthen instructional practices that meet the learning needs of all students at Epping Middle/ High School. (self-study, teacher interviews, classroom observations)

Student load and class size almost always enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. Evidence provided by the school, including the master schedule, class enrollments, and the self-study, shows that on average class sizes are twenty. The Endicott survey finds that students, staff, and parents overwhelmingly (between 71 and 86 percent) agree that student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. Teachers echoed this during their interviews,

as did students during student shadowing. The high school guidance counselor acknowledged that her caseload is "a lot" but also manageable. When the master schedule allows manageable and comfortable student loads and class sizes, as at present, teachers can continue to be empowered to meet the learning needs of individual students. (master schedule, enrollment data, self-study, Endicott survey, teacher interviews, student shadowing)

The principal, working with other building leaders, continuously provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The Endicott survey shows that 70.6 percent of students agree their principal is clear about what he wants to accomplish for all students, and 75.5 percent of staff agrees the principal provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Monthly building leadership meetings, faculty meetings, and emails are all evidence cited in the self-study and provided as means of communication among the principals and other school stakeholders concerning instructional leadership. Teachers identified a consistent "open door policy" for teachers by both the high school and middle school principals and assistant principals as an illustration of instructional leadership around topics like *FEI*. Continued open communication and instructional leadership among the school principals and staff and students will ensure continued promotion of the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. (Endicott survey, self-study, faculty meeting agendas, teacher interviews)

Teachers, students, and parents are almost always involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promotes responsibility and ownership. While the Endicott survey reveals that only a minority of students and staff (48.2 percent and 42.9 percent, respectively) agree they have input in important decisions made at the school; 63 percent of parents surveyed feel they have input in decisions. Parents confirmed this impression that they have input into school decisions. The high school principal reports that parents provide input at quarterly parent advisory meetings. Interviewed teachers felt that they are afforded the opportunity to offer input through building leadership team as well as by an open door policy with the school administrators. Students, especially student leaders, also expressed that they feel they are heard by means of the open door policy employed by administrators. According to the self-study, teachers regularly participate in shared decision-making through various committees and regular faculty meetings, while students engage in decision-making through extracurricular activities and the student leadership team. The self-study made clear that increasing student participation in decision-making is a need, but conversations with students did not show this to be such a priority. There is significant opportunity, but inconsistent participation by students, in the decision-making process, and when all constituents participate, the shared responsibility and sense of ownership over school decisions and policies will increase. (Endicott survey, parents, teacher interviews, principal,, school board, students, self-study).

Teachers regularly exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning. According to the self-study there are, "many teacher leaders who demonstrate initiative and a desire to improve [the] school and further engage…students in authentic learning." Teachers serve on building leadership teams and provide instructional leadership for their peers at the department level. Epping Middle and High School teachers demonstrate statewide and national leadership with regard to PACE. A master list of extracurricular advisors provided by the administration also illustrates the extent to which teachers engage with students beyond the parameters of the classroom. Teachers report a willingness to engage in solving school problems rather than to lament difficulties in the school community. The leadership provided by Epping Middle and High School teachers is critical to the improvement of the school and increases students' engagement in learning. (self-study, administrative list of advisors, student/parent handbook, teacher interviews)

The school board, superintendent, and principal are frequently collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. There is considerable evidence that the school board, superintendent, and principals act in a collaborative manner. The superintendent meets regularly with school board members and attends all of the school board meetings. The principal also attends school board meetings once a month. There is a district leadership team, which meets on a bi-monthly basis. The superintendent and principals meet on an as-needed basis, which reportedly is an estimated twenty-five to thirty times per year. In interviews with the superintendent and principals, it is clear that communication is a two-way loop. According to the Endicott survey,, 70 percent of all students feel that their principal is clear about what he wants the school to accomplish for all of the students. Furthermore, 75 percent of staff believes the principal and other school-based administrators provide instructional leadership that is consistent with the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Because the school board, superintendent, and principals are collaborative and reflective, their efforts are aligned to ensure that students achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (Endicott survey, teacher interviews, principal, school board, self-study)

The school board and superintendent generally provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. There is evidence that the school board and superintendent provide the principal with the decision-making authority to lead the school. For example, during an interview with members of the school board, it was reported that the budgeting process is initiated by allowing the principals of both the middle and high schools to present their inclusive list of needs and desires. Although the school board's next step is to work with the administrative leadership team to prioritize, it is seen by the board as an important step to allow the principals to express to the school board their initial recommendations. Further evidence that the school board and superintendent provide the principals with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school lies within the Epping School District job description for the school principal. Performance responsibilities are clearly outlined in five areas, including school management, school leadership, vision leadership, equity, and district responsibilities. Finally, school board policies provided clear evidence of the provision of decision-making authority to the principals. For example, Policy CHCA – Approval of Handbooks and Directives, provides principals with full authority for the development of employee and student handbooks. Policy CFA-R – Duties of the Principal, outlines the principals' authority relative to promoting the success of all students, recruitment and hiring of personnel, and evaluation of personnel. With sufficient and consistent decision-making authority to lead, the principal is able to put into practice the school's vision of 21st century learning. (School Board Interviews, Principal Job Descriptions, School Board Policy)

Commendations:

1. The restoration of a dedicated school resource officer
2. The number and variety of clubs, organizations, athletic teams, and extra-curricular activities, which helps to keep students engaged in their education and promotes student leadership
3. The development of the Life of a Blue Devil initiative resulting in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all students
4. The unified sports teams which provide enriching experiences for students
5. The inclusive practices of Epping Middle and High Schools, including the heterogeneous class offerings in grades 9 and 10
6. The daily collaboration time given to teachers of grades 6-10
7. The master calendar which is created using the option of hours and maximizes professional development time

8. The professional development for teachers related to developing quality performance assessments in collaboration with the Center for Collaborative Instruction
9. The utilization of outside consultants to embed professional development for teachers
10. The Epping School District's 21st Century Student Outcomes for College, Career and Life Ready Students which clearly articulates the overall plan for professional development through 2016
11. The current research used in the development of a teacher evaluation model
12. The practice of incorporating an analysis of student achievement data into teachers' evaluations
13. The school-wide adoption of the research-based *FEI* curriculum framework
14. The principals' instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations
15. The formal job description of the principal, reflecting the provision of a high level of decision-making authority
16. The level of collaboration between the school board and superintendent that is frequent and on-going
17. The extensive level of collaboration between the superintendent and the principals
18. The leadership roles exercised by teachers on numerous committees, clubs, co-curricular, performance assessment for competency education team
19. The optimal class sizes that allow for individualized instruction

Recommendations:

1. Ensure the consistent visibility of the school resource officer throughout the school, such as in the hallways and other non-structured areas
2. Evaluate the effectiveness and sustainability of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program
3. Increase the frequency with which advisories meet in grades 11 and 12
4. Provide professional development to faculty and staff to implement the advisory program consistently throughout the school
5. Provide a structure for common collaboration time that will ensure time for all teachers to engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning
6. Develop and implement an induction program, including mentoring, for newly hired teachers
7. Place greater emphasis on the investment in, and awareness of, the roles and functions of the student representative body
8. Assess the effectiveness of current student to counselor ratios and ensure that students are able to regularly access their guidance counselors

6   **School Resources for Learning**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusions:

The dedicated staff at Epping Middle/ High School provides many students with a number of timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies that promote individual students, including identified and at-risk students, in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. At the middle school level, students participate in morning meetings, which are structured by the guidance department to include social/emotional health topics such as bullying, gossiping, and personal relationships. In the past year, the district has hired a resource officer and additional guidance personnel to better support students, especially those that are identified and at risk. As part of the district's work to improve student services, a pupil assistance team has been formed. The team, which monitors students at the high school, incorporates guidance, the school resource officer, 9th and 10th grade team leaders, the special education director, and administrators. Members of the team indicate that there are up to 25 students who are regularly monitored to help maintain academic, social, and emotional achievement and well-being. Results from the Endicott survey indicate that 22.9 percent of students disagree that the school meets the needs of all students, and 24.1 percent are undecided about this question. Surveyed parents indicate that 65.6 percent of them feel there are sufficient services for all students. The bullying prevention program, although not as prevalent as it has been in the past, has been incorporated into middle school morning meetings. Students report that these interventions have been highly effective. Epping Middle and High Schools have indicated that they are committed to providing support for identified and at-risk students. Reading and math specialists utilize STAR testing data and a Response to Intervention to identify and provide support for at-risk and identified students. The special education department provides a continuum of services based on individual needs, in alignment with state and federal guidelines, to provide support for students. Special education professionals work with teachers to coordinate plans for students, including Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), 504 Plans, and alternative learning plans to better help them achieve the school's 21st century learning goals. There are peer-led groups that provide peer leadership and support for students. Granite Youth Alliance is a drug and alcohol abuse awareness team. Many of the members of the Granite Youth Alliance are also part of the student leadership team. Additionally the schools have recently adopted the Life of a "Blue Devil" program based on the Life of an Athlete program, which utilizes student-athlete leaders to promote healthy lifestyle choices. These programs promote student achievement and allow students to take a more active role in supporting one another. As the school continues to coordinate intervention strategies for all students, including those who qualify for special services and the general education at-risk students, it will be able to fully support each student's achievement for the school's 21st century learning expectations. (Endicott survey, self-study, parents, students, school leadership, teacher interviews)

Epping Middle and High School often provides information to families, especially to those most in need about available student support services. For the families of identified students, the *New Hampshire Special Education Procedural Right Handbook* is offered at every special education meeting. This booklet gives parents information about their rights in regard to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Parents are also given information and invited to meetings with the NH Department of Vocational Rehabilitation which provides assistance with moving identified students into jobs upon graduation. The special services section of the district's website provides information about Section 504, special education, occupational therapy, and speech/language services. Depending on the needs and ability of the individual student, parents are provided with information about support and social groups in the area such as Special Olympics and Project Unify. Epping Middle and High Schools provide support for students who are homeless in accordance with the 1987 McKenney-Vento Act. Both schools have a liaison for the homeless who is responsible for coordinating the paperwork and services for homeless students. Those services include, but are not limited to, setting up the free lunch program,

arranging transportation, referring families to community agencies for assistance, and working in coordination with the liaisons of homeless students in other schools if siblings live in the Epping School District. Additionally, the middle and high schools share a resource room with donated non-perishable food, clothing, and school supplies that are readily available for homeless students and any student or family in crisis. Guidance counselors at the middle and high schools indicate that they are frequently in contact with parents of students through phone calls, emails, and meetings to address issues that arise. However, interviews with parents and students indicate that communication about available services is not always effective and the Endicott survey shows that only 20.7 percent of students agree that they have the opportunity to meet with their guidance counselor regularly. The self-study indicates that the high school guidance website is updated regularly with information about upcoming guidance-related activities such as informational evening presentations, SAT registration, and course scheduling information, however parents and students are unaware of these services being offered by guidance. In an effort to improve communication, the high school guidance department maintains a Facebook page and Twitter feed that is updated regularly with information and important reminders for parents and students. Epping Middle and High Schools provide most handbooks and forms electronically through the website and email.   Parents are notified that they can receive hard copies if they do not have Internet access. When the school consistently provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services and guidance programs then they will enhance and improve student learning and well being. (Endicott survey, school nurse, teacher interviews, self-study)

Epping Middle and High Schools' support services staff uses a variety of technology to deliver a range of services to the majority of students. School counseling service personnel use a program called NovaNet, a web-based program containing the entire core high school curricula. This program is used by counseling services to help students recover lost or missed credit/competencies. Sufficient administrative technologies are available to members of counseling services at Epping Middle and High Schools. There are five computers available for student use in the high school guidance office. These computers are designated for students to explore college and career options, as well as to participate in Virtual Learning Academy Charter School classes. Counseling services use Naviance, a comprehensive college and career web-based planning program used to help students explore post-secondary options, complete career and learning style assessments, and communicate with colleges and universities. PowerSchool, a web-based student information system, is also utilized by counseling services. School counselors use this program to schedule classes for students, find student demographic information, track attendance, and monitor grades. Similarly, special education services use both PowerSchool and NovaNET as well. PowerSchool is utilized by special education services to monitor student grades, track graduation progress, look at student schedules, and check attendance. Special education services personnel use state mandated EasyIEP to write Individual Education Plans (IEPs), allowing the special education department to draft IEPs and IEP progress reports, and monitor compliance. Counseling services also use this program when school counselors need to create or update counseling goals for special education students who require individual or group counseling. Members of special education services have account access to audio books and many digital text readers and writers as well as IXL which provides online math practice activities for students. Boardmaker is a program that helps educators make and adapt curriculum materials for students who require symbols. Special education services also have access to iPods that are used by students to download books. The students use iPads as communication devices, as well as for pictorial schedules, and to reinforce skills and concepts being taught. Specific iPad applications are also used to assist with developing new skills and concepts. Health services at Epping Middle and High Schools have a specialized school health services software program called School Nurse Assistant Program Health Center (SNAP). The students' health information data is entered so that it can be stored, sorted, retrieved, coordinated, and reviewed. This allows health services

to track physicals, immunizations, headaches, injuries, concussions, and a host of other maladies. SNAP also gives health services the ability to send letters and reminders to staff and parents to provide care coordination and confidentiality. Health services have access to a copier with a scanner used for distributing injury reports that are given to students to take home immediately or reports can be scanned for parents and teachers. Additionally, the scanner gives health services the ability to quickly email information to parents and staff. They are able to disseminate both student illness information and preventative information much faster and more easily. Library/media services personnel at Epping Middle and High School utilize an integrated online catalog and circulation system. Students have access to 29 computers, a collection of non-fiction e-books available through an online catalog, and EBSCO a periodical database. In addition to these resources, library/media services provide online student portfolio support. Through the use of a variety of technologies, support services personnel provide individual and responsive services to many of the students at EMHS providing an open line of communication among all constituents. (central office personnel, self-study, students, school support staff, steering committee members, teacher interviews)

The school counseling services provide individual and group support to students, and work collaboratively with the community to provide outreach services. Relevant student assessment data, is disaggregated and forwarded to the appropriate recipients for review and action. Due to the unconventional assignments and responsibilities of certified/licensed personnel, the school's counseling services and support staff are unable to deliver a written, developmental program and to meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling. At Epping Middle School students are served by one guidance counselor who also acts as an adventure-based counselor. One guidance counselor, an alternative program coordinator, and a student services counselor serve the students of Epping High School. A mental health counselor from the Seacoast Mental Health Center is available two days a week to meet the needs of students from kindergarten to 12th grade. The town recently approved by warrant article the position of school resource officer who serves as part of the pupil assistance team. The school district has a written, developmental guidance plan that is posted on the district's web site. The comprehensive plan covers the three domains stipulated by the American School Counselors Association: academic development, career development, and personal/social development. The four main components of the guidance plan are individual planning, guidance curriculum, responsive services, and systems support. Student interviews, the school's website and teacher interviews show that the school's support systems and response services are comprehensive, however, additional opportunities to provide a guidance curriculum and individual planning will allow the department to improve current strong practices and provide enhanced services to all students.
The Epping Middle and High Schools guidance counselors meet with most students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling. Career and college counseling begins with 8th grade students during the 3rd and 4th quarter of the school year. The high school guidance counselor assists with this process. Beginning in 9th grade, and through the 10th grade, the guidance counselor meets with groups of students to begin discussing post-secondary education, career options, and topics that are relevant to the current school climate such as bullying and harassment. The guidance counselor meets with most students in-group sessions in March to discuss course selection for the following year. In the 11th grade, the guidance counselor meets with each student individually at least once. All 12th grade students have at least two individual meetings to discuss post-secondary options in the fall and winter months; the students as needed schedule additional meetings. Student interviews, parent meetings and the Endicott survey indicate that there are some students who are not familiar with their guidance counselor. Only twenty-two percent of students in the Endicott survey responded that they meet with their guidance counselor regularly.   In addition to academic needs all students have access to school counseling services for whatever needs may arise throughout the school day. The Endicott survey indicates that

over 60 percent of students know to whom they can go for counseling services. The adventure-based groups coordinated by the Epping Middle School guidance counselor serve a large number of middle school students. Students in the 9th and 10th grades who do not have planned individual meetings, may schedule their own meeting with the guidance counselor to discuss class options, academic difficulties, and personal/social issues. Many times the guidance counselor will request a meeting with a student to address specific issues. The school district has a relationship with Seacoast Mental Health Center (SMHC). Space is provided within the school for the SMHC counselor to meet with students. Each school has a liaison for the homeless who is responsible for coordinating the needs of the homeless students in the school and who works closely with the family to assist them in finding the necessary resources. Contact is frequently made with parents and caregivers. DCYF, juvenile probation, and other state agencies are contacted as needed. Epping Middle and High Schools use data from standardized assessments such as NECAP, STAR, PSAT, and SAT to improve student services. Youth Risk Behavior Survey and OLWEUS anti-bullying surveys are also used in planning school-wide interventions and activities. The school counseling services provide individual and group support to students, work collaboratively with the community to provide outreach services and use ongoing relevant assessment data, and when the counselors deliver a written, developmental program and meet regularly with students they will be able to effectively improve services to ensure that each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. (central office personnel, school support staff, parents, students, district's website, teacher interviews)

The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff to provide preventative health services and direct intervention services, use an appropriate referral process, conduct ongoing student health assessments, but the use of ongoing relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community is limited. Over 79 percent of staff and over 54 percent of parents report that health services personnel provide preventive health and direct intervention services. Health services staff collaborate with agencies and other team members to conduct site assessments for the purpose of identifying issues and/or providing recommendations. When appropriate, Epping Middle and High School's health services provide referrals to parents/guardians with a form for health care providers to document findings and recommendations. The health services staff participates in health education directly and indirectly by teaching students and staff to become more assertive health consumers and to assume greater responsibility for their own health. Currently, the health services staff does not have a formal means to collect and assess data from the school community. Continuing to provide an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who provide preventative health services and direct intervention services has a positive impact on each student's overall health and well-being. A formal means for collecting relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, will improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations. (Endicott survey, school support staff, self-study, classroom observations, district's website)

Epping Middle and High Schools share a certified media specialist and a full-time paraprofessional who are sporadically engaged in the implementation of curriculum. According to the Endicott survey, 40 percent of the staff feels the media personnel are actively engaged in the development and implementation of the curriculum. The media specialist attends all district-level faculty meetings as directed by the middle and high schools' principals. She also provides professional development opportunities to acquaint teachers with multimedia, research, and information literacy. Media integration is practiced by ordering books, by the use of online resources, and by holding events such as poetry slam and skyping author visits. At the middle school level, a literacy team has been created with Literacy Week held right before Christmas. A book swap has been developed as well as a school book

and movie club. In the Endicott survey, almost half of students (46.7 percent) report that they do not use the library regularly during classes, although 68.7 percent reports that the library has resources that they need for learning. Teacher interviews indicated that they are not regularly using the library because of dated materials. The media center's electronic collection as well as its technology resources support the school's curriculum, however evidence provided as part of the self-study, students, and teacher interviews indicated that materials in the collection are often outdated for curricular needs. Online resources available to students include an online subscription to EBSCO, Encyclopedia Britannica, Merriam-Webster's dictionary, and online student portfolio support. Students and staff have access to 29 desktop computers in the media center that assist them with study and research. In addition they have one computers on wheels [COW] cart of Chromebooks in each school and a collection of audio books. Students, faculty, and support staff have access to the media center information services, facilities, and programs during the school day. The media center is open Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., however several sources have reported that having the library media center available for students after school is a critical need for their students to allow them access to learning resources beyond the school day. The self-study noted that teachers use the media center to connect with media center specialists about class projects, borrow technology, and access the professional collection. As the library media staff members continue to update and integrate materials, technologies, and other information services into the curriculum,and gather feedback from the school community through the Student Advisory Committee and participation in both EMS and EHS team meetings, they will actively engage and respond to the students' and staff interests and needs and will continue to support independent learning as students strive to achieve the 21st century learning expectations. (Endicott survey, self-study, students, teacher interviews, school's website)

Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners (ELL) have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who promote opportunities and guide students. The special education staff consists of one director, one combination building coordinator/ SLP, one combination building coordinator/teacher, seven case managers, one speech assistant, one school psychologist, 21 paraprofessionals, one occupational therapist, one physical therapist, one student services counselor, one clerical position on site, and another at the SAU building; not all of these positions are full time. They also have a math specialist working with students in the middle school. According to the Endicott survey, 48 percent of the staff feels that there is an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff, and 67 percent staff reports that support services personnel collaborate with teachers, counselors, and service delivery providers to provide appropriate accommodations and modifications for students within the classroom. Epping Middle and High School's heterogeneous classes provide inclusive learning opportunities for students. Those with remedial reading needs are sometimes given substitute assignments. Case managers and paraprofessionals help provide severely cognitively impaired students with a modified curriculum, and case managers often provide modified rubrics to assess learning. Students who have language barriers receive strong support as they integrate into the community. For English speakers of other languages (ESOL), the district has incorporated "Futures," a specific newcomer's curriculum for middle and high school students who have no previous educational background in English. This material includes print text and software. Individualized instruction plans are developed to address specific student needs. Ongoing consultation with classroom teachers and data obtained from ACCESS, NECAPS, STAR Testing, PowerSchool, and classroom observations inform this teaching. An important component of the ESOL program in Epping is a strong connection with ESOL families to foster communication, support of needs, and an effective way for families with limited English skills to develop a sense of community with the school district. This is accomplished by attending Open House and parent/teacher conferences. Letters, emails, personal meetings, assistance with school documents,

translated newsletters, and other informational materials are part of this ongoing communication. The district encourages professional development for teachers in the area of ESOL. This includes attending the annual Northern New England TESOL, a conference for school districts with low populations of ESOL students, and monthly meetings with ESOL colleagues from Southern New Hampshire. Staff education on ESOL academic expectations and strategies is done on a one-to-one basis, again appropriate in a low-incidence district. Case managers use a variety of data to inform instruction. This includes data collected from classroom assessments, NECAP, AIMSWEB, and STAR (3x per year), as well as the formal three-year re-evaluations. Math classes have been leveled which has benefited those learning at a slower pace. A certified reading specialist has been budgeted for the 2015-2016 school year, as this has been identified this as a critical need for students. When schools are providing coordinated and inclusive services for all students in need of support, then they are able to individualize a program of support for all identified students, so that each child has an enhanced opportunity to achieve his or her 21st century learning expectations. (central office personnel, steering committee members, self-study, school support staff, teacher interviews, classroom observations)

Commendations:

1. The formation of a pupil assistance team that includes guidance counselors, the school resource officer, teachers, special education personnel, and administration to ensure students needs are met
2. The use of social media to improve communication between parents, students, staff, and the community
3. The variety of technology available for student support services
4. The implementation of community resources for at-risk students
5. The plan for the addition of a school resource officer
6. The adjustments made to library programming based on student input
7. The care and support of Epping students provided by the special education department

Recommendations:

1. Develop and deliver a written developmental guidance program for all students
2. Ensure adequate communication with students, parents, and the community around guidance programs and events
3. Fully utilize the features of PowerSchool, SNAP, and Naviance
4. Assess the degree to which the guidance department is meeting the needs all students
5. Initiate a plan for collecting relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community to improve services and to ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations
6. Update and integrate media materials, technologies, and other information services so that they are more relevant to the curriculum
7. Ensure that the school's library media staff are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum
8. Provide after-school access for students to the library media center
9. Implement a library collection weeding process
10. Direct efforts toward additional reading support as identified by the Epping School District

7 Community Resources for Learning

The achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations requires active community, governing board, and parent advocacy. Through dependable and adequate funding, the community provides the personnel, resources, and facilities to support the delivery of curriculum, instruction, programs, and services.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusions

The community and district's governing body provide dependable funding in many areas for a wide range of school programs and services, sufficient professional and support staff, ongoing professional development and curriculum revision, a full range of technology support, sufficient equipment, and sufficient instructional materials and supplies. Evidence from the school budget indicates that the school has sufficient funds to sustain programs and needed supports to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. The middle and high schools have sufficient numbers of professional and support staff. This is evident by the enrollment data of students and staff listed on the New Hampshire Department of Education's website. There is adequate funding for staff development, curriculum design and course reimbursement for staff. Through staff interviews it is evident that there is enough infrastructural support for technology but no evidence of instructional support or training pertaining to technology integration. It is evident from the school budget, facility tour, and staff interviews that there is funding to sustain equipment, instructional materials, and supplies. The dependable funding provided for school programs, personnel, services, sufficient professional and support staff, ongoing professional development, a range of technology support, curriculum revision, sufficient equipment, and instructional materials and supplies, enhances the educational experience and ability of students to meet the learning 21st century learning expectations of the school. (school budget, facility tour, teacher interviews)

Epping High School /Middle School develops, plans, and funds most programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant, to properly maintain, catalogue and replace equipment, and to keep the school clean on a daily basis. Staff reports concerns over the lack of an electronic work order system to ensure that the facility and maintenance plan is being followed. Additionally, the written or electronic evidence is lacking for the cataloguing and maintenance of equipment used to maintain the building. The school does not consistently replace equipment used to maintain the building. There is a funding plan in place for equipment repair and replacement. The self-study report indicates needs in the implementation of the facilities master plan addressing air conditioning in areas of the high school to support a healthy learning environment. The Endicott survey indicates that 75.2 percent of the students, 81.6 percent of the staff, and 97 percent of the parents feel the school is clean and well maintained. All classrooms are cleaned on a nightly basis. There are five total custodial staff members, three full-time and two part-time. This is inadequate custodial staffing for the regular maintenance of the building upkeep due to the additional responsibility of maintenance of the grounds and playing fields. Additionally, there is a lack of storage space for both interior and exterior equipment and supplies. There is clear responsibility for the supervision of the building's maintenance, upkeep, and cleanliness through the director of facilities and supervisor of grounds on site. When the community adequately funds staffing for grounds maintenance, it will ensure maintenance and upgrading of equipment are held to the high standards that many of the schools' other programs are held. (self-study, teacher interviews, facility tour, Endicott survey, Standard subcommittee members, facility and maintenance plan, facilities master plan, district budget)

The community funds and the school implements an adequate long-range plan that addresses programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, facility needs, technology, and capital improvements. When comparing the 2013-2014 school budget to the 2014-2015 school budget, it is evident that programs and services are being funded so that they can be sustained and improved upon heading into the 2015-2016 budget process. The superintendent is analyzing projected enrollment and staffing needs through census data. Appropriate staffing needs are then put into the budget to ensure funding for the following school year. Evident in the capital improvement plan, the school district has plans to renovate the floors and ceiling of the high school and to address the HVAC issues at the high

school. The technology plan for the district lays out a specific plan to increase infrastructure, purchase new equipment and software and replace or update existing equipment and software. An efficient and effective process for planning for capital investments, enrollment changes, programs and services, and general facility needs is an integral part of providing support for the delivery of the school's high learning expectations and core values. (capital improvement plan, technology plan, school budget)

The Epping Middle and High School employs a formal process for actively involving faculty, building administrators, and community members in the development and implementation of the budget process. The budgetary process begins early in fall for the following school year. Department heads send budgetary templates out to individual teachers to present needs for the following school year. These templates include dollar amounts and justification of need. Department heads and principals collectively review the completed templates. Upon approval of templates by the principal, they are forwarded to the district's business administrator. In October, the business administrator and superintendent add all approved requests into the budget and submit it to the Epping School Board for review. The principal speaks with the school board to justify requests. The board amends and votes to approve the budget by the end of November. The board-approved budget then goes to the town budget committee for further amendment and approval. On or before the third Tuesday in January, there is a public hearing to present the budget to the people of Epping. The budget is publically voted on by the school board and town budget committee. The approved and amended budget is then presented to voters on the second Tuesday in March, Election Day, for approval by the citizens of Epping. The voter approved budget is then sent back to district's business administrator, and the principal is informed of changes to the budget submitted in October. The final budget is then distributed by the principal to department heads. The principal regularly updates department heads and staff of the current status of budget allocations. The principal and department heads are responsible for the implementation of the budget. Continued adherence to this budget process will ensure that all community stakeholders are involved. (school budget, teacher interviews, Standard subcommittee members, school board, self-study)

The school site and plant supports the delivery of high quality school programs and services in most areas. The facility was most recently renovated in 2007 with the construction of a new middle school attached to the high school building. This allowed the middle school students to move out of the high school building and opened up an additional floor and new gymnasium, locker rooms, and fitness center for the high school. Air conditioning was incorporated into the HVAC system for the new middle school and interior classrooms in the high school received AC units to support a healthy and productive learning environment. This is evident from facilities tours, capital improvement plans, and staff interviews. When talking with staff in the high school, it is evident that there are still HVAC issues that negatively impact the learning environment. The school cafeteria staff uphold safety and health regulations as well as maintaining a clean working environment. During student shadowing it was evident that students proactively create opportunities to help maintain the site. Students volunteer in the cafeteria to recycle food waste to be delivered and used by a local pig farm. Through students and staff interviews and feedback, the cleanliness and condition of the middle/high school is conducive to the delivery of high quality school programs and services. At present there is no Wi-Fi access in the middle school gym impacting the use of digital resources and communication through PowerSchool. There is a strong sense of Blue Devil pride exhibited by staff and students in the professional upkeep of the physical plant and a consistent focus on improving the overall learning experience for all students through acquisition of resources, upgrades to the school physical plant, and effective general maintenance. (facility tour, students, teacher interviews)

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

posts documentation on annual inspections conducted in compliance with fire, health, and safety regulations. Most areas of the school have adequate ventilation, temperature control, and air quality. However, staff reports areas of inadequate ventilation and inconsistent temperatures in interior areas of the high school building. There is one operating elevator and two lifts. Each contains current and visible yearly inspection posted by the New Hampshire Department of Labor. The kitchen has a current food establishment permit and maintains records of students with specific dietary and allergy needs. The nurse's office is adequately staffed and maintains electronic records of student needs and visitation. The school has a crisis management team and consistently implements emergency drills. Safety procedures are clearly posted in student areas. Each classroom maintains an emergency "to go" bag with first aid supplies for each student in the room. In addition, custodians report that the exterior doors are unlocked upon student arrival. Main entrance doors are locked after student arrival and have a card-scan system for staff entry. Guests must be buzzed in through the main entrance. There are cameras in place at each entrance monitored by the recently added school resource officer. Cameras cover only one hallway. Faculty restrooms are often left unlocked and accessible to students. Students with mobility issues in the high school are given a key to operate the lift. The school maintains plans for preventative health services, emergency response, health advisories, and immunization requirements. These plans are communicated on the school's website. Teachers report a lack of transparency in the reporting and process of completion of work orders. There were complaints that orders were not fulfilled in a timely manner. Although the school's physical plant is in compliance with fire, health and safety regulations, without a mechanism to track maintenance and repairs, work orders will not be completed in a timely manner. (facility tour, student shadowing, classroom observations, teachers, school support staff, school administrators, self-study, safety reports)

All professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school. Through staff interviews and parents it is evident that the schools communicate student academic progress through the online platform PowerSchool. Parents and students have the ability to see their grades on all assignments in real time. Parents are encouraged by teachers, staff, and administration to use this resource to monitor their students' academic and attendance status. This allows for immediate communication between school staff and families around academic performance. Progress reports and report cards are mailed home quarterly as stated in the self-study. PowerSchool as well as email/mail communication are sent out to parents and families at specific intervals dictated by district policy on student attendance. These communications may result in conferences with parents/families and staff. Parent/Teacher conferences occur three times a year for the middle school and twice a year for the high school. Each school also holds an Open House in the fall during which families are introduced to staff and the curriculum. The Endicott survey shows that 69.2 percent of staff agrees that the professional staff engages with parents and families, yet 59 percent of the parents agree that the professional staff engages with parents and families. The administration relays day-to-day information and calendar events in multiples ways. In speaking with administrators, newsletters are emailed home weekly for the middle school and monthly for the high school. Administration and guidance have created Facebook pages to increase communication between the school and the community. The self-study states that in an effort to reach out to those families who are less connected to the school, administration, teachers, guidance and special education staff review student performance regularly and implement interventions that include parent contacts and meetings. As a result, all professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected to the school. (self-study, teacher interviews, parents, Endicott survey)

Epping Middle and High School consistently develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning. Partnerships have been fostered over the years with community groups including Epping Youth Organizations Unite to Help. This program is a coalition of members including school personnel, students, local businesses, and other civic organizations. The school has implemented the Olweus Bullying Prevention program. The program is designed to be a partnership with faculty, parents, and students. Community members are invited to present school-wide within this program. Additionally, the school sponsors workshops for community members, including "Becoming a Loving and Logic Parent," "Sexuality and Developmental Disabilities," and "Smart but Scattered Teens." The number of students participating in New Hampshire Scholars program has increased consistently over the past three years. Juniors and seniors are eligible to participate in an internship and job shadowing program through a partnership with Seacoast School of Technology. These students are offered the opportunity to take college credit courses. However, partnerships and opportunities for students are lacking with area colleges and universities not in the SST program. There is no evidence of internships or partnerships for general education students. Epping high School students participate in the Annual Community Service Day. Project Unify is also implemented at the school. This program is designed to develop school communities where all youth are agents of change, fostering respect, dignity, and advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities. According to the Endicott survey, 65 percent of parents and staff agree the school maintains effective partnerships. The principal meets monthly with the Parent Advisory Council and meets consistently with Athletic Advisory Council. Varied partnerships in the community with business, parents, and higher education facilitate and offer students opportunities to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations. (teacher interviews, parents, Endicott survey, Standard subcommittee members, students)

Commendations:

1. The formal process of incorporating faculty input for equipment, instructional materials, and supplies into the development of the school's budget is a direct representation of feedback and suggestions
2. The dependable funding provided by the district's governing body for a wide range of school programs and services, sufficient professional and support staff, ongoing professional development and sufficient instructional materials and supplies
3. The to access diverse professional development opportunities including district professional development, outside courses, and curriculum development
4. The commitment of the custodial and maintenance staff, in spite of limited resources, as evidenced by the hard work, dedication, and personal investment in the facility
5. The general cleanliness of the school
6. The satisfaction by administrators, faculty, and staff in their inclusion in the budget process
7. The cafeteria staff work to provide a clean and well-maintained environment
8. The well-maintained and safe facility and grounds
9. The schools' commitment to student safety process and drills
10. The effort of the food service workers to provide a variety of nutritious and delicious meals
11. The opportunity for parents to meet with administrators and staff through the Parent Advisory Council to maintain an effective partnerships
12. The Seacoast School of Technology programs which allow student opportunities for community-based learning
13. The efforts of high school students who help middle school students with math to demonstrate community service

Recommendations:
1. Ensure sufficient support to assist educators when using technology in the classroom
2. Ensure appropriate record keeping and feedback for faculty and staff after submission of work orders
3. Develop and implement a plan to properly maintain, catalogue and replace equipment
4. Develop and implement a plan to ensure the maintenance and timely repair of the building and school plant
5. Develop a plan to provide adequate funding for staff and equipment for maintenance of grounds
6. Develop and implement a plan to upgrade the HVAC systems in the high school building
7. Address the issue of access to Wi-Fi in the middle school gym
8. Develop partnerships with area colleges and universities
9. Increase opportunities for all students to be involved with community-based learning and real-world activities that link classroom knowledge with authentic applications

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

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

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

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

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

Epping Middle /High School
NEASC Accreditation Visit
March 8-11, 2012

Visiting Committee

Karen Libby Kingwood Regional High School Wolfeboro NH, 03894	Paula Hamel Dracut Senior High School Dracut, MA 01826
Bruce Parsons Plymouth High Regional School Plymouth, NH 03264	Andrea Ange Campbell High School Litchfield, NH 03052
Kelly Stukenborg Weymouth High School Weynouth, MA 02190	Richard Nickerson Windham High School Windham ME 04062
David Hobbs Winnacunnet High School Hampton, NH 03842	Tobi Chassie Pittsfield School District Pittsfield, NH 03263
Bruce Brasier Biddeford High School Biddeford ME 04005	Donald McCullough City on a Hill Charter Public School Roxbury, MA 02119
Jennifer Carbonneau Littleton High School Littleton NH 03561	Jeffrey Aubuchon Oakmont Regional High School Ashburnham, MA 06082
Michelle Cotnoir Hopkinton Middle High School Contoocook NH 03229	Joel Senez Enfield High School Enfield, CT 06082
Elizabeth Nason Old Orchard Beach High School Old Orchard Beach, ME 04064	Karen Payne Kingwood Regional High School Wolfeboro NH, 03894

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

Committee on Public Secondary Schools

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

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

- elimination of fine arts, practical arts and student activities

- diminished upkeep and maintenance of facilities

- significantly decreased funding

- cuts in the level of administrative and supervisory staffing

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

- grade level responsibilities of the principal

- cuts in the number of support staff

- decreases in student services

- cuts in the educational media staffing

- increases in student enrollment that cannot be accommodated

- takeover by the state

- inordinate user fees

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

Epping Middle / High School

Commendations:

Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations

1. The alignment of the Epping Middle and High School Core Values and Beliefs across grades to provide consistency in the school
2. The strong presence of and commitment to the core values, specifically the civic and social expectations
3. The "Blue Devil Pride" which is felt when one walks through the doors
4. The responsibility students assume for learning and behavior
5. The faculty, staff, and students who work collaboratively to foster a positive, safe, and nurturing school environment
6. The commitment to review and revise curriculum, instructional practices, and assessment, using best practices and relevant research

Curriculum

1. The clear articulation of the 21st century learning expectations and course competencies across all curricular areas
2. The commitment of the school to use of a common curricular format for syllabi, lesson, and unit plans
3. The development of rubrics related to the 21st century learning expectations
4. The support of team-based planning time to facilitate cross-disciplinary planning and teaching through grade 10
5. The variety and depth of learning experiences provided to students during the school day
6. The implementation and continued support of formal curriculum models
7. The numerous targeted walk-through observations by administrators
8. The effective horizontal articulation of curriculum in grades 6 through 10
9. The number of co-curricular activities available to students
10. The school district's participation in the PACE assessment project

Instruction
1. The work teachers have done with the *FEI* consultant that has helped ensure teacher instructional practices are continuously examined
2. The focus on assigning authentic tasks that encourage active student engagement
3. The teachers' use of differentiation in their instructional practices
4. The extensive use of formative assessments that help inform teacher instruction

5. The consistent implementation of effective instructional practices
6. The annual reflections completed by teachers to encourage self-assessment of instructional practices
7. The process of support and feedback provided by administrators and other experts which helps teachers reflect on their instructional practices

Assessment of and for Student Learning

1. The high school report card that is specifically designed to include multiple measures of performance for each student
2. The school's involvement in the USDOE approved Performance Assessment for Competency Education (PACE) Pilot as one of only four districts in the country, "to pilot a new locally managed assessment process for accountability purposes"
3. The thoughtful and clear course-specific rubrics and school-wide rubrics for eight 21st century learning expectations
4. The focus on improving individual student achievement through the analysis of a variety of data
5. The extensive work with research-based practices in effective instruction
6. The pervasive practice among teachers of clarifying learning goals and assessment tools during planning and prior to beginning each lesson
7. The demonstration of a wide range of assessment strategies including performance-based assessments
8. The development of performance-based, competency-aligned summative assessments
9. The widespread, consistent implementation of the school's re-assessment policy
10. The corrective feedback in the form of formative assessments directly related to summative assessment
11. The frequent checking for understanding in the classroom to meet individual student needs
12. The school policies that provide for a balanced use of formative and summative assessments
13. The education of stakeholders around formative and summative assessments and competency-based assessment

School Culture and Leadership

1. The restoration of a dedicated school resource officer
2. The number and variety of clubs, organizations, athletic teams, and extra-curricular activities, which helps to keep students engaged in their education and promotes student leadership
3. The development of the Life as a Blue Devil initiative resulting in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all students
4. The unified sports teams which provide enriching experiences for students
5. The inclusive practices of Epping Middle and High Schools, including the heterogeneous class offerings in grades 9 and 10
6. The daily collaboration time given to teachers of grades 6-10
7. The master calendar which is created using the option of hours and maximizes professional development time
8. The professional development for teachers related to developing quality performance assessments in collaboration with the Center for Collaborative Instruction
9. The utilization of outside consultants to embed professional development for teachers

10. The Epping School District's 21st Century Student Outcomes for College, Career and Life Ready Students which clearly articulates the overall plan for professional development through 2016
11. The current research used in the development of a teacher evaluation model
12. The practice of incorporating an analysis of student achievement data into teachers' evaluations
13. The school-wide adoption of the research-based *FEI* curriculum framework
14. The principals' instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations
15. The formal job description of the principal, reflecting the provision of a high level of decision-making authority
16. The level of collaboration between the school board and superintendent that is frequent and on-going
17. The extensive level of collaboration between the superintendent and the principals
18. The leadership roles exercised by teachers on numerous committees, clubs, co-curricular, performance assessment for competency education team
19. The optimal class sizes that allow for individualized instruction

School Resources for Learning
1. The formation of a pupil assistance team that includes guidance counselors, the school resource officer, teachers, special education personnel, and administration to ensure students needs are met
2. The use of social media to improve communication between parents, students, staff, and the community
3. The variety of technology available for student support services
4. The implementation of community resources for at-risk students
5. The addition of a school resource officer
6. The adjustments made to library programming based on student input
7. The care and support of Epping students provided by the special education department

Community Resources for Learning
1. The formal process of incorporating faculty input for equipment, instructional materials, and supplies into the development of the school's budget is a direct representation of feedback and suggestions
2. The dependable funding provided by the district's governing body for a wide range of school programs and services, sufficient professional and support staff, ongoing professional development and sufficient instructional materials and supplies
3. The to access diverse professional development opportunities including district professional development, outside courses, and curriculum development
4. The commitment of the custodial and maintenance staff, in spite of limited resources, as evidenced by the hard work, dedication, and personal investment in the facility
5. The general cleanliness of the school
6. The satisfaction by administrators, faculty, and staff in their inclusion in the budget process
7. The cafeteria staff work to provide a clean and well-maintained environment
8. The well-maintained and safe facility and grounds
9. The schools' commitment to student safety process and drills
10. The effort of the food service workers to provide a variety of nutritious and delicious meals

11. The opportunity for parents to meet with administrators and staff through the Parent Advisory Council to maintain an effective partnerships
12. The Seacoast School of Technology programs which allow student opportunities for community-based learning
13. The efforts of high school students who help middle school students with math to demonstrate community service

Recommendations

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations
1. Develop and implement a process to review the six guiding principles which is inclusive of all stakeholders--including parents and students to provide meaningful investment of these values throughout the community
2. Ensure the use of the school-wide rubrics as an integral component of the curriculum, instruction, assessment, and reporting process

Curriculum
1. Maintain the level of funding necessary to sustain research-based curriculum development
2. Develop and refine essential questions within lessons and units to promote inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking
3. Complete the implementation and integration of school-wide analytic rubrics
4. Establish and implement a formal review process for the evaluation and revision of the curriculum
5. Increase the opportunities for students to engage in extended learning opportunities
6. Provide opportunities for cross-disciplinary planning and vertical articulation at the 11th and 12th grade levels
7. Develop and implement a plan to provide additional technology resources as well as the professional development necessary to effectively use them
8. Assess instructional equipment needs specifically related to fitness equipment and technology to ensure curriculum programs are sufficiently funded and supported
9. Assess continuing space constraints, specifically the shared gym space and stage, in order to address the impact of these constraints on the delivery of curriculum

Instruction
1. Provide professional development for teachers in the integration of technology into instructional practices
2. Increase availability of technology resources for students
3. Increase the emphasis on cross-disciplinary learning in the 11th and 12th grades
4. Ensure teachers adjust their instructional practices by providing additional support and differentiated instructional strategies within the regular classroom
5. Institute formal opportunities for peer observation and feedback among teachers within and between the content areas ranging from grades 6 through 12
6. Establish formal channels of communication to solicit feedback from parents and students to improve instructional practices

7. Provide regular and formal opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively and reflectively with their grades 6 through 12 content-specific peers on their instructional practices

Assessment of and for Student Learning

1. Develop a formal process to assess and report whole-school progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations based on school-wide rubrics
2. Embed the school's skill competencies across the curriculum and explicitly teach students how they apply to their learning
3. Ensure that each student has regular opportunities to be assessed in both formative and summative ways on each of the 21st century learning expectations
4. Implement the plan to reflect learner progress on the 21st century learning expectations on the middle school report card
5. Consistently disaggregate data to identify and address student achievement inequalities
6. Review and discuss student work and assessments to identify and address inequities
7. Provide more opportunities for self-assessment of student work
8. Provide formal, purposeful time for content area teachers to meet as vertical teams to share student products, receive feedback on, and revise summative assessments
9. Use student work, common assessments, progress on the 21st century learning expectations, and survey data from students and alumni to revise curriculum and improve instructional practice
10. Evaluate how the school's core values and beliefs are reflected in grading and reporting practices
11. Ensure that grading practices are consistent across subject areas and by all teachers

School Culture and Leadership

1. Ensure the consistent visibility of the school resource officer throughout the school, such as in the hallways and other non-structured areas
2. Evaluate the effectiveness and sustainability of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program
3. Increase the frequency with which advisories meet in grades 11 and 12
4. Provide professional development to faculty and staff to implement the advisory program consistently throughout the school
5. Provide a structure for common collaboration time that will ensure time for all teachers to engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning
6. Develop and implement an induction program, including mentoring, for newly hired teachers
7. Place greater emphasis on the investment in, and awareness of, the roles and functions of the student representative body
8. Assess the effectiveness of current student to counselor ratios and ensure that students are able to regularly access their guidance counselors

School Resources for Learning

1. Develop and deliver a written developmental guidance program for all students

2. Ensure adequate communication with students, parents, and the community around guidance programs and events
3. Fully utilize the features of PowerSchool, SNAP, and Naviance
4. Assess the degree to which the guidance department is meeting the needs all students
5. Initiate a plan for collecting relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community to improve services and to ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations
6. Update and integrate media materials, technologies, and other information services so that they are more relevant to the curriculum
7. Ensure that the school's library media staff are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum
8. Provide after-school access for students to the library media center
9. Implement a library collection weeding process
10. Direct efforts toward additional reading support as identified by the Epping School District

Community Resources for Learning

1. Ensure sufficient support to assist educators when using technology in the classroom
2. Ensure appropriate record keeping and feedback for faculty and staff after submission of work orders
3. Develop and implement a plan to properly maintain, catalogue and replace equipment
4. Develop and implement a plan to ensure the maintenance and timely repair of the building and school plant
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