

**New England Association of
School and Colleges, Inc.**

Commission on Public Schools



Committee on Public Secondary Schools

**Report of the Visiting Team for
Stoneham High School**

Stoneham, MA

April 30, 2017 - May 03, 2017

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STATEMENT ON LIMITATIONS

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

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

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

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

The Committee on Public Secondary School's Standards for Accreditation serve as the foundation for the accreditation process and by which accreditation decisions are made. The seven Standards are qualitative, challenging, and reflect current research and best practice. The Standards, written and approved by the membership, establish the components of schools to ensure an effective and appropriate focus on teaching and learning and the support of teaching and learning.

Teaching and Learning Standards

Core Values and Beliefs About Learning

Curriculum

Instruction

Assessment of and for Student Learning

Support Standards

School Culture and Leadership

School Resources for Learning

Community Resources for Learning

CORE VALUES, BELIEFS, AND LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Teaching and Learning Standard

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

1. The school community engages in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning.
2. The school has challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social and civic competencies. Each expectation is defined by specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement.
3. The school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school, drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions and resource allocations.
4. The school regularly reviews and revises its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school community priorities.

CURRICULUM

Teaching and Learning Standard

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

1. The curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
2. The curriculum is written in a common format that includes:
 - units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills
 - the school's 21st century learning expectations
 - instructional strategies
 - assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success, school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics.
3. The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through:
 - inquiry and problem-solving
 - higher order thinking
 - cross-disciplinary learning
 - authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school
 - informed and ethical use of technology.
4. There is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum.
5. Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.
6. Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.
7. The district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research.

INSTRUCTION

Teaching and Learning Standard

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

1. Teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.
2. Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by:
 - personalizing instruction
 - engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning
 - engaging students as active and self-directed learners
 - emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking
 - applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks
 - engaging students in self-assessment and reflection
 - integrating technology.
3. Teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by:
 - using formative assessment, especially during instructional time
 - strategically differentiating
 - purposefully organizing group learning activities
 - providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom.
4. Teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by:
 - using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments
 - examining student work
 - using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents
 - examining current research
 - engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.
5. Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices.

ASSESSMENT OF AND FOR STUDENT LEARNING

Teaching and Learning Standard

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

1. The professional staff continuously employs a formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations based on specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics
2. The school's professional staff communicates:
 - individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families
 - the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community.
3. Professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.
4. Prior to each unit of study, teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed.
5. Prior to summative assessments, teachers provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success, such as corresponding rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement.
6. In each unit of study, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.
7. Teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments.
8. Teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.
9. Teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.
10. Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, including all of the following:
 - student work
 - common course and common grade-level assessments
 - individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations
 - standardized assessments
 - data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions
 - survey data from current students and alumni.
11. Grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's

core values and beliefs about learning.

SCHOOL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

Support Standard

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

1. The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.
2. The school is equitable and inclusive, ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making certain that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students reflecting the diversity of the student body, fostering heterogeneity, and supporting the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
3. There is a formal, on-going program(s) or process(es) through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.
4. In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff:
 - engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning
 - use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices
 - dedicate formal time to implement professional development
 - apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
5. School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning.
6. The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.
7. Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students.
8. The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.
9. Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.
10. Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning.
11. The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

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

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Support Standard

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

1. The school has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
2. The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services.
3. Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.
4. School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - deliver a written, developmental program
 - meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling
 - engage in individual and group meetings with all students
 - deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers
 - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.
5. The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - provide preventative health services and direct intervention services
 - use an appropriate referral process
 - conduct ongoing student health assessments
 - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.
6. Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum
 - provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum
 - ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school
 - are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning
 - conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations.
7. Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations
 - provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students

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

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Support Standard

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.

School and Community Summary

School and Community Summary

Stoneham High School is located in the town of Stoneham, Massachusetts, with a total area of 6.7 square miles. The town of Stoneham is an inner-core suburb, located 10 miles north of Boston at the junction of Interstates 95 and 93. The community is home to many small businesses and is a short distance from many colleges and universities in the Boston area. Stoneham commercial property consists primarily of businesses, professional and semi-professional, and according to 2010 U.S Census, the town's population was 21,437. According to the 2014 Stoneham Town Center Strategic Action Plan, the median household income of \$72, 938 and 5.5% of families have earned income below poverty line. The ethnic demographics of the school mirror those of the community where 92% of the students identify as predominantly white; the remaining 8% of the student body identifies as 3% Hispanic, 2% African American, and 3% Asian. 14.6% of the school's population is low income. For most of the students at Stoneham High School, English is their first language with 1.2% of students enrolled in the ELL program.

The Stoneham Public School District is comprised of three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school educating a total of 2,204 students. Two of the elementary schools, Robin Hood and Colonial Park, educate students from pre-K to fourth grade. South Elementary School holds grades kindergarten to four, the Central Middle School grades five through eight, and the High School grades nine through twelve. Stoneham High School serves a student body of 650 students in grades 9 through 12. Stoneham is also home to Greater Boston Academy, a K-12 school, and Saint Patrick School, a private pre-K-8 school. The SEEM Collaborative is a multi-faceted educational services agency that serves Stoneham and surrounding towns. There are also a number of private preschools.

Previously, student enrollment at the high school has shown some decline, but it is expected that in the next two years the high school will expand its enrollment to include fifty or more new students. The dropout rate has risen slightly from 0.7% in 2013 to 1.3% in 2014. Student attendance for the 2014-2015 school year was 95.3%. Last year (2014-2015), Stoneham High School sent 93.2% of its graduates onto some form of higher education, including 75% attending four-year colleges. As of 2015, 6% of the senior class entered the workforce or the military. Based on the preparation of its graduates for college, Stoneham High School was recognized by *Newsweek* in 2014 as one of the top 25 high schools in Massachusetts and number 338 in the country. It also leads in the area of state testing with most students over 92% scoring proficient or advanced in ELA and mathematics and 89% scoring proficient or advanced in science.

The town of Stoneham FY16 Budget provided by the town administrator provided the following financial information. The town's total expenditure for FY16 was \$69,716,610. The total expenditure for education in town, including monies spent on out of district placements and including vocational schools and special education programs for that same year was \$27,229,770, or approximately 39% of the town budget. With a tax rate of 12.14%, the tax portion allocated to education is \$12,051,370 or 44%, with 40% contributed from town income and 16% from Chapter 70 state aid. In 2014, the per pupil expenditure was \$14, 517, equal to the state average.

In 2015-2016, Stoneham High School had the full-time equivalent of 55.6 regular education teachers, a 0.5 ELL teacher and the 8.6 special education teachers. The attendance rate for teachers at the high school was 95.44%. In 2012, Stoneham High School changed the schedule from an eight-period block schedule to a seven-period schedule with one period that rotates, in order to comply with Massachusetts Student Learning Time requirements. All students have 990 hours of instruction and the schedule includes flexible instructional time (FIT) that is positioned every third school day. The high school also expanded its graduation requirements to include additional social studies, math, physical education, and science classes. The ways in which students could fulfill the technology requirement were also expanded.

The school offers all core subject areas (English, math, science, and social studies) at five different instructional levels: Advanced Placement (AP), honors, intensive, comprehensive, and transitional. 45.3% of 12th grade students take at least one of the ten AP courses offered. Stoneham High School follows an inclusion model for

students with IEPs. In order to graduate from Stoneham High School, there are several requirements that must be met. Students must pass four sequential English courses. In social studies, students must pass a minimum of fifteen credits including one year-long class in World History and two sequential year-long courses in U.S. History. In mathematics, students must pass four courses that involve four full years or eight semesters of study, including Algebra I and Geometry. In the science department, students need a minimum of 15 credits, including Biology. Students are required to take health education class in tenth grade and one physical education class each year; these classes are heterogeneously grouped. Students must also earn 5 credits in art and/or music and 2.5 credits in an approved technology course.

Though not a high school graduation requirement, Stoneham High School offers three world languages: Spanish, Italian and French. A variety of electives in fine and performing arts, business & technology, and family & consumer science disciplines are also available to students in all grade levels. Students are also able to take additional elective courses in the core subject areas. Stoneham High School also offers a Peer Leadership Class for juniors and seniors. There are several local educational opportunities available to students and the community which include online learning for credit recovery and supplementation of course offerings, dual enrollment with community colleges, and a special grant given to the AP Spanish class that encourages service learning outside of the school.

Stoneham High School has a wide variety of programs and initiatives in place to support student success and engage students. The high school has two programs, Reaching Independence through Structured Environments (RISE) and Students Taking Responsibility in Developing Excellence (STRIDE) to address students with differing educational needs. The Stoneham High School special education department provides the STRIDE program for students who require a structured, self-contained classroom with therapeutic support. The program supports students with emotional disabilities while providing curricula taught by teachers in a small-group setting. The RISE program is for students who require a highly modified academic curriculum with a focus on daily living skills, vocational skills and job skills. Services are provided as indicated on each student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). Additional resource courses are available to students with disabilities and an academic support course is available to first and second year ELL students. The school has four guidance counselors available to all students, as well as one school psychologist, a .4 FTE adjustment counselor and access to the district behavioral health and substance abuse counselor.

Stoneham has a variety of co-curricular clubs including math team, science club, Gay Straight Alliance, Substance Abuse Coalition, foreign language club, Model United Nations, drama club, school newspaper, and Stoneham Peers Achieving Real Connections (SPARC). The athletic department at the high school has 26 sports including soccer, field hockey, track, cheerleading, swimming, volleyball, golf, lacrosse, ice hockey, tennis, and gymnastics.

Stoneham High School holds partnerships with a few local businesses in the community. Stoneham Ford and Ford Motor Corporation offers a fundraiser called Drive For Your School. During the Foreign Language Week cultural celebration, several restaurants partner with the foreign language club to donate food. Local professionals participate in junior career awareness day and the Stoneham Rotary Club has helped in the formation of the Interact Club at the school. The Stoneham Business Community Educational Foundation Grant Program and the Cummings Property Grant Program provide grants to teachers at the High School for various projects including the school garden. In addition to businesses, Stoneham High School also has partnerships with some schools and colleges. Harvard University offers our science department a partnership where students are able to participate in lab demonstrations. There is the opportunity for dual enrollment with community colleges and the high school. The students and staff benefit from student nurse interns, student teachers and guidance interns.

Finally, there are a number of student recognition programs at Stoneham High School. Academically, students can be selected for the National Honor Society, Student of the Month, high and regular honor roll. As seniors, students are awarded academic medals for high achievement in respective departments. Seniors who have been recognized as varsity scholars all four years are awarded a Lamp of Knowledge. At graduation, a male and female receive the Horton and Nadeau Awards for service to the school community.

Annually, two juniors are awarded the Scholarship, Integrity, Leadership, Spirit (SILS) Award, as well as junior

book awards for outstanding success in the subject areas. The English department awards prizes for the Shakespeare Festival and for the Phil Riley Poetry Contest, while the social studies department acknowledges students for National History Day achievements. The school also recognizes its athletes by giving Varsity Scholar Awards, Freshman Athletic Awards, and Senior Athletic Awards. The school recognizes its musicians and actors with the Tri-M National Music Honor Society and Drama Awards.

Related Files

- [2017-03-15-13:09_community-report.gdoc](#)

Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations

Stoneham High School Core Values: **Curiosity Integrity Responsibility Community**

Mission statement:

- To foster intellectual **curiosity** and **integrity** within all students
- To encourage students to take personal **responsibility** for their learning
- To establish a **community** of informed and engaged world citizens

21st Century Learning Expectations:

Learning Expectation 1: Students analyze problems and present solutions to them in diverse and innovative ways.

Learning Expectation 2: Students demonstrate personal responsibility and respect towards others

Learning Expectation 3: Students use appropriate technology and tools to access, evaluate and effectively apply information.

Learning Expectation 4: Students think critically and communicate clearly and effectively

Learning Expectation 5: Students engage successfully in independent and collaborative work.

Introduction

Introduction

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

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

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

Teaching and Learning Standards

- Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

- Curriculum

- Instruction

- Assessment of and for Student Learning

Support of Teaching and Learning Standards

- School Culture and Leadership

- School Resources for Learning

- Community Resources for Learning

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

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit - The School Self-Study

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

The self-study of Stoneham High School extended over a period of thirty-three school months from March 2014 to December 2016. The visiting team was pleased to note that student citizens, parents, and school 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 alignment with the Standards for Accreditation and the quality of their educational offerings in light of the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, and unique student population. In addition to using the Self-Study Guides developed by a representative group of New England educators and approved by the Committee, Stoneham High School also used questionnaires developed by The Research Center at Endicott College to reflect the concepts contained in the Standards for Accreditation. These materials provided discussion items for a comprehensive assessment of the school by the professional staff during the self-study.

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

The Process Used by the Visiting Team

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

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

- review of the school's self-study materials
- 14 hours shadowing 14 students for a half day
- a total of 4 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 32 teachers about their work, instructional approaches, and the assessment of student learning
- group meetings with students, parents, school and district administrators, and teachers

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

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

Standard 1 - Core Values

Standard 1

Stoneham High School Core Values: **C**uriosity **I**ntegrity **R**esponsibility **C**ommunity

Mission statement:

- To foster intellectual **curiosity** and **integrity** within all students
- To encourage students to take personal **responsibility** for their learning
- To establish a **community** of informed and engaged world citizens

Mission Statement

Anticipating the challenges and opportunities of a 21st century world, the Stoneham Public Schools develop students who:

- *Are creative, critical and independent thinkers*
- *Demonstrate respect for and acceptance of self and others*
- *Know and apply communication and information literacy skills*
- *Are responsible contributors to the local community*

Core Values

All members of the school community:

- *Support a safe, inclusive educational environment*
- *Foster and hold high expectations for student learning*
- *Share responsibility for the success of our students*

Standard 1 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The school community engaged 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. The current core values and beliefs as well as 21st century learning expectations at Stoneham High School were completely revised within the last two years. Teachers, through discussion and voting, determined the language that would be used in the description of the 21st century learning expectations as well as how to best divide the assessment of student ability for each expectation. Although parents and larger community input was limited, those stakeholders were well versed in these values and beliefs and supported the work being done at this school. Stoneham High School provides opportunities for staff to participate in training about current research-based best practices by offering professional development opportunities on a variety of topics. This serves to encourage the faculty to increase their knowledge of research-based best practices in order to align their curriculum with the core values and 21st century expectations. Stoneham High School offers both peer lead instruction for teachers as well as out-of-district presenters. These offerings are made available to staff on the school's website. For example, history teachers have received professional development from Primary Sources on Inclusive Classroom practices and English teachers have used professional days to receive training in scoring MCAS open response questions. After collaborating, drafting and finalizing the school's core values and 21st century learning expectations, Stoneham High School has incorporated a student advisory program to reflect the importance of community as a core value. This program fosters adult/students relationships between faculty and students at Stoneham High School. These small groups of 12-15 students per 1 or 2 adults are maintained throughout the four years of each students' high school career. For freshman and sophomore advisories, a member of the peer leadership team is assigned to each group to cultivate relationships between under and upperclassmen. A committee of faculty and staff designs the different programs and projects for the advisories that include community involvement such as the Nan Project, working with retirement homes, and the local food bank. There is a clearly identified message created for each project that reflects one (or multiple) core values and beliefs. As a result of Stoneham High School engaging in a dynamic, collaborative and inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices, students will benefit from a learning environment that supports the 21st century learning expectations and are led by the core values and beliefs about learning.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- parents
- central office personnel
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school has challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, and civic competencies. Each expectation is defined by specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic rubrics, which define targeted high levels of achievement. Stoneham High School has identified five major learning expectations that reflect its core values and 21st century learning expectations. In its self-study, Stoneham High School discusses the recent implementation of school-wide rubrics to collect specific and measurable criteria for success. The use of these rubrics has been distributed to the appropriate discipline which will then use specific assessments to provide evidence of the students' rating on these rubrics. Students are expected to score a 2 or 3 on at least one of these rubrics in each of the disciplines by their junior year. However teachers across all disciplines state that if a student is in danger of receiving a score of 1 on a learning expectation, teachers have intervention methods to assist the struggling student. Stoneham High School addresses 21st century learning expectations by providing challenging honors and AP classes. Students indicated the curriculum is very challenging but that teachers help and support students who are struggling to achieve the targeted learning expectations. Teachers provide students with opportunities to meet the school-wide learning expectations. One student said, "Teachers check with the class to see where everyone is and to make sure we all understand. Then we decide as a class what we need to cover in the period before we move on to the next topic." Additionally, in an Italian course assignment, students produced a script and a video cooking a dessert and describing the process in Italian. Each expectation of this assignment was defined by a specific and measurable criteria for success described in the assignment rubric. Stoneham High School demonstrates high expectations for all students by providing special education students and parents with ample opportunities to be academically successful and involved in the school community. The school offers the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) program for special education families to describe and engage families in their special education programs in the building. There are also appropriate translators/interpreters for the growing ELL population that help both students and families to access important school information. Additionally, the student advisory program encourages social and civic engagement of students in the school and surrounding community. Because SHS implements 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social and civic competencies, students benefit from instruction that is personalized and targeted to achieve the learning outcomes.

Sources of Evidence

- teachers
- students
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Indicator 3

Conclusions

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. The inclusion of the core values and expectations is widely evidenced in both classrooms and social areas of the school. This dedication to the success of all students is driven by an inherent belief that all members of the school community actively *support a safe, inclusive educational environment, foster and hold high expectations for student learning and share responsibility for the success of the students*. To achieve this goal, one of SHS's core values is highlighted each week and referenced in a school-wide format via the morning announcements at start of every school day in the form of a quote. This quote actively reflects one of the school's core values and directs students' and staffs' attention to a core value that should be considered and embedded in their school day activities. Core values driving instruction can be found in the computer classes comprised of students of very diverse levels, where strong students are paired with students facing more challenges. This fosters peer collaboration that includes students of all learning levels and encourages them to feel comfortable in the classroom. The recently updated mission statement, which includes core values and beliefs and 21st century learning expectations, is posted in multiple locations throughout the school including front entrance, classroom walls and on some course syllabi. Accountability to each learning expectation is divided among the curricular areas: expectation 1, math and science; expectation 2, physical education and health; expectation 3, history; expectation 4, ELA and world language; and expectation 5, arts and family consumer sciences. Teachers described how smoothly the assigned 21st century learning expectations aligned with the assignments and rubrics that they already had embedded in their curricula. The Peer Leadership course offered at SHS is yet another example of the core values driving curriculum and instruction, as this entire, highly selective course is designed based on core values such as "respect and community involvement." This group is involved not only in the school community but in the Stoneham and surrounding towns communities as well. The inclusive aspect of SHS's core values is demonstrated by engaging in ADA upgrades to make sure that all students have the same access to the physical plant. For instance, ADA upgrades include front curving on the side walk will be redesign to allow wheelchair access, placement of a handicap button on the front door, elevator door sensor, emergency phone inside elevator, corridor doors will be power-opened and will only close when a fire alarm is activated, fire alarm strobe lights in bathrooms and braille buttons will be installed in the elevator. When every aspect of the school is driven by the core values and beliefs, policies, procedures, decisions and resources allocations will be directed toward supporting the success of all students as well as the school community.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- central office personnel
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Indicator 4

Conclusions

The school has implemented its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research and some data sources and will begin a process of review and revision as a long term practice for setting school and district priorities. Stoneham High School created and distributes yearly surveys asking parents, students and community members about their understanding and beliefs in regards to the school's core values and learning expectations. Staff then analyzes this data to compare to the core values the school has in place. Stoneham High School has gathered data via multiple sources to confirm the alignment of instruction and curriculum with the core values and learning expectations in the form of creating action plans based on standardized test data. Stoneham High School uses data compiling systems, (Edwin Analytics and SIMS) that allows administration to evaluate student success rates as a measurement of the impact of the values and beliefs being implemented in the classroom. Stoneham High School is researching and implementing various programs that can increase the school's ability to offer students the best learning opportunities to prepare them with 21st century skills. For example Stoneham High School organized a STEM career day for students to explore STEM opportunities. School committee members indicated that the tech industry is producing jobs at a rate of two to one compared to other industries within route 128. Several classes observed used technology to enhance instruction. In a history class students use Chromebooks to complete assignments and conduct research. In a math class, students have access to graphing calculator and the teacher used a SMARTBoard in her instruction. This math teacher also adjusts her syllabus frequently to communicate the learning expectations to students. Many teachers also use doc cameras to project materials for all students to visualize clearly. When SHS implements a program to review and revise the core values and beliefs and learning expectations, all students will benefit from curriculum and instruction that consistently prepares them to meet the 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- teacher interview
- teachers
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 1 Commendations

Commendation

The creation and implementation of specific and measurable 21st century learning expectations that are divided appropriately among the disciplines

Commendation

The utilization of surveys to collect information from students, parents, teachers and community members regarding the development of core values and beliefs and 21st century learning expectations

Commendation

The collaboration across the entire faculty and in specific department groups to determine the most efficient and accurate ways to create fitting assessments of student work to demonstrate student ability to meet the 21st century learning expectations

Commendation

The reinforcement of the core values via the morning announcements and quote of the week

Standard 1 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop and implement a structure to ensure all faculty consistently utilize the procedures developed for scoring the school-wide rubrics across all disciplines

Recommendation

Develop and implement a scheduled plan to review and revise the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as school and district priorities

Recommendation

Provide all students with clarification of how the core values, beliefs, and the 21st century learning expectations are assessed and how they connect to class assignments

Recommendation

Implement a plan to evaluate/review/revise the use of the school-wide rubrics rating the students' ability to demonstrate their understanding of the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations

Standard 2 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The curriculum that is completed in Rubicon Atlas is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations. However, the curriculum that is not in Atlas is currently being reviewed, under the supervision of a newly hired curriculum director. Students are given a grade on their report card for meeting the school's 21st century learning expectations. Parents are given a letter explaining which teachers are responsible for which expectation. Teachers also explained to students their rubric and what assignments were used to calculate the three ratings. This year, Stoneham High School has started giving grades related to the 21st century learning expectations connected to specific curriculum. Currently, there is not enough data to make decisions related to curriculum, however as teachers continue using the rubrics in each department to rate the 21st century learning expectations, they will have the opportunity to review the data for the 21st learning expectation related to curriculum. The 21st century learning expectation rubrics will be reviewed and modified, as needed. It is clearly defined in the curricula that have been completed where students specifically practice the 21st century learning expectations. Ninth and tenth grade science teachers, and eleventh and twelfth grade mathematics teachers are responsible for expectation 1; physical education and health teachers are responsible for expectation 2; social studies teachers are responsible for expectation 3; English and world languages teachers are responsible for expectation 4; teachers of elective courses are responsible for expectation 5. For the curriculum that is written in the Rubicon Atlas, teachers clearly identify connections between course content and the five learning expectations. In the self-study, the English department stated that they use Socratic circles to foster and assess critical thinking. The math curriculum addresses analyzing problems and presenting solutions in innovative and diverse ways through its systems of equations projects; students solve one problem in three different ways and explain which method is best and why. The social studies department focuses on the use of appropriate technology and tools to access, evaluate, and apply information through the research component of the National History Day project. The curriculum and learning expectations are aligned with the state, national (physical education), and international (technology) standards for each discipline. Teachers are all aware of which learning expectations they are responsible for teaching. Student work samples in both Italian and Spanish show that students engage successfully in independent and collaborative work. The Day of the Dead (Spanish projects), Spanish journal writing samples, showcase collaboration, cross-curricular disciplines (study of Cuba and Spain and cultural comparisons), and the ability to think critically and communicate clearly and effectively in another language. The Italian PowerPoint projects asked students to show inquiry, application of knowledge, and technology. In PE class over the semester, students demonstrate personal responsibility by using pedometers daily in class to track their progress in walking. Student work samples in ELL addressed a topic writing paper with draft, fill ins, and creating interrogative questions. Students utilized the revision/improvement process and engagement is evident. In the Curriculum Standard Subcommittee meeting, science teachers discussed a "plate boundary map" and "profiles of sea floor" lab. In the lab, students have to analyze and calculate the topography of sea floor/sea level bed. When teachers at Stoneham High School have completed all the current subject curricula in Rubicon Atlas, purposefully designed to ensure comprehensive coverage of all standards, students will be guided to practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student work
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The curriculum is written in a common format that includes units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills; the school's 21st century learning expectations; instructional strategies; and assessment practices that include the use of specific and measurable criteria for success, such as school-wide analytic or course specific rubrics. However, just over half of the curriculum has been completely updated in Rubicon Atlas.

The teachers have an online template (Rubicon Atlas) to use to write their curriculum. However, according to the Endicott survey, of 132 courses only 74 (56 percent) curriculums are completed in Rubicon Atlas. During the teacher interviews and the meeting with the Curriculum Standard Subcommittee, they also stated that some departments' curriculums are complete (mostly the four core content areas), however they stated about half the curricula still needs to be updated and put in Rubicon Atlas. The director of curriculum has a plan to get all the curricula updated and in Rubicon Atlas for grades K-12. The curriculum guides that have been completed in Rubicon Atlas include essential questions, concepts, content and skills. The curriculum guides completed in Rubicon Atlas include applicable 21st century learning expectations. Also, the curriculum guides that have been completed in Rubicon Atlas include assessment practices which use specific and measurable criteria for success. Each completed course in Rubicon Atlas has course-specific rubrics. According to the Endicott survey, only 32 percent of staff agree that there is a common, formal, curriculum template used in all subject areas. In the self-study, SHS states that the units of study within written curriculum for each course contain overarching learning standards as well as supporting standards for key concepts and skills. Each unit of study includes detailed descriptions of essential questions, skills and content, instructional resources, suggested activities, assessments, and when applicable, common assessments. The essential questions and supporting standards reflect the learning standards for each unit, guide assessment, and demonstrate learning of those standards. Instructional strategies are suggested on written curriculum. The instructional strategies are appropriate for heterogeneous groupings and learning styles.

Teachers use best practices regularly to adjust their instructional strategies to meet students' needs. In the English department, teachers use anticipation guides before reading literature. Students respond to statements relevant to the unit on a continuum of "agree" to "disagree" and take part in a discussion activity, "Taking a Stand," by moving to opposite sides of the classroom depending on their opinions. Assessment practices are included in written curriculum. Teachers use formal and informal assessments to measure student progress. The assessments offer students ample and various opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge. Teachers use best practices to adjust the type of assessment to fairly and consistently meet students' unique needs. Because the 21st century learning expectations were adopted in the fall of 2015, they are not formally addressed in the written curriculum; however, they are printed in the student handbook. In addition, evidence for integration of the learning expectations are evident in the world languages department's use of formal essay writing to foster and assess critical thinking and communication. The use of school-wide analytic and course-specific rubrics are also not currently addressed in the written curriculum; however, they too are printed in the handbook. Math and science teachers will assess learning expectation 1: "students analyze problems and present solutions to them in diverse and innovative ways." Physical education and health teachers will assess learning expectation 2: "students demonstrate personal responsibility and respect toward others." Social studies will assess learning expectation 3: "students use appropriate technology and tools to access, evaluate, and effectively apply information. English and foreign language teachers will assess learning expectation 4: students think critically and communicate clearly and effectively." Elective course teachers will assess learning expectation 5: "students engage successfully in independent and collaborative work." Curriculum Standard Subcommittee members discussed that the curriculum is not completely updated in the online curriculum template. The teachers are not part of the curriculum revision process. The ELL teacher indicated that the department wrote curriculum for one day and presently, wants follow-up professional development to complete the curriculum process. Teachers stated that students are not knowledgeable about the new 21st century learning expectations. The mathematics department implemented DBQ (Document-Based Questioning) formal essays and has trained teachers grades 7-12 about these new expectations. An example is the World War 2 DBQ formal essay in which history students

had to write using their background knowledge and incorporate their higher order thinking skills. Because of continual updating of the curriculum across all content areas in a common template with clear connections to the 21st century learning expectations, students will have a deeper understanding and greater success toward meeting the 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 3

Conclusions

The curriculum that is complete 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.

According to the Endicott survey, 79 percent of students feel that the content of their courses challenges them to think critically and solve problems. Most departments offer honors and Advanced Placement (AP) level classes, which provide students with alternative assignments and research opportunities that exceed the typical course requirements. The emphasis in these classes is on demanding and complex work. For instance, in order to emphasize inquiry and problem solving in world languages classes, students work diligently to develop target language skills and an ability to think critically about comparisons between the American culture and the target culture. Also, in social studies classes, students answer Document-Based Questions (DBQs) in essay format. Furthermore, in Biology classes, students conduct an inquiry lab on radish seeds, analyze a case study, and complete an enzyme lab. In addition to core academic classes, physical education classes instill the value of teamwork; this is measured by students collaboratively playing cooperative games and working together to accomplish a goal. According to the Endicott survey, 75 percent of staff agree that the curriculum in their department/content area emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge. In order to emphasize higher order thinking skills, earth science students analyze data of seafloor topography gathered through echo-sounding techniques. Likewise, in AP Environmental Science, students answer Free Response Questions. In English, students work to answer essential questions throughout the units of study, which focus on reading, writing, critical thinking, and speaking. The teachers elaborated on this class work during the Curriculum Standard Subcommittee meeting.

Cross-disciplinary learning is evident throughout the curriculum, even though there is no formal structure in place to ensure implementation. This is evidenced by the split opinions between teachers and students on the Endicott survey. Only 48 percent of the staff think that the curriculum emphasizes cross-disciplinary learning. However, 64 percent of the total student body and 71 percent of seniors agree that the information learned in one class can be used in another class. The survey also shows that 57 percent of students think that their teachers include topics from other subject areas in their classes. In the Consumer and Career Math curriculum, there are ties to economics and history since students study the stock market crash of 1929 and the resulting Depression, compare it to the present day market and economy, and play an online fictional stock market game against other students throughout the country. In the physical education curriculum, cross-disciplinary learning is evident when students study the muscular and skeletal system, body movements, and planes of motion. In sophomore English classes, students learn about segregation and Jim Crow Laws while reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Although many teachers make an effort to include cross-disciplinary learning, there are no explicit opportunities for collaboration across disciplines. Students stated that their chemistry teacher makes connections to math they have taken. Also, the National History Day project that the students complete in history class have connections made to their English class throughout the project.

The curriculum provides many authentic learning opportunities for students both in and out of school. According to the Endicott survey, 81 percent of staff reports that curriculum emphasizes authentic application of knowledge. For example, the culinary arts elective runs Sparty's Cafe, a student-run restaurant that provides catering for sporting events, senior class activities, and teacher luncheons. Also, the fine arts department hosts an annual May Arts Festival, which celebrates both visual arts and music. Within school, students in Italian classes are given a real Italian train ticket that they must read to decipher in order to "board" the correct train; to complete the activity successfully, students must demonstrate knowledge of numbers, dates, times, Italian culture, and geographical locations. In English I Honors classes, students deliver persuasive speeches on a microphone in the auditorium in front of their class. Several courses offer authentic learning opportunities through field trips. Some Biology classes attend a Harvard University Life Science Workshop consisting of laboratory experiences related to topics presented in the classroom. Further, all early U.S. History classes take an interactive walk on the Freedom Trail in Boston to achieve authentic understanding of U.S. history. In addition to

field trips, students can participate in authentic learning opportunities in some of the 25 co-curricular opportunities such as DECA Club, *The Spartan Spirit* newspaper, Model UN, student council, or by serving as class officers.

According to the Endicott survey, 80 percent of students and 70 percent of staff agree that curriculum emphasizes the informed and ethical use of technology. At the beginning of each school year, all students must read and sign a Technology Acceptable Use Policy, which is found in the student handbook. Also, all freshmen attend library orientation during English to learn the appropriate use of technology from the library/media and technology specialist. Each department uses various forms of technology tailored to the needs of its curriculum and students. For example, students in English classes must gather and cite information for a research paper their junior year. Both the English and ELL curricula utilize Google Docs for students to share, revise, and edit documents with their teacher and peers. The social studies curriculum incorporates a project where students create a FaceBook page for a pivotal and influential person from World War I using knowledge learned in class. Photography students research a famous photographer and create a website based on that person. When the curriculum is complete, emphasizing 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, with informed and ethical use of technology, students will develop proficiency in the achievement of the standards.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Only the curriculum that has been updated shows clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum. In the Curriculum Standard Subcommittee meeting, teachers reported that lesson plans are not collected and therefore, are not reviewed by curriculum coordinators, department chairpersons or program supervisors. When asked how administration knows the written curriculum is being taught, the teachers said, "they just know from coming in the classroom." The online documents are in progress and show that SHS is directing efforts toward an online curriculum development plan. In the meeting with district administration, it is evident that SHS does not know whether or not teachers are teaching the curriculum outlined in the documents. Teachers do not have common planning time to get together to share lesson planning/curriculum in a formal way. According to administrators, there is a concerted effort to maintain consistency in the curriculum K-12. Principals have monthly meetings with staff to increase collaboration in the district among program supervisors, department chairpersons and directors. According to the Endicott survey, 55 percent of staff agrees that there is alignment between written and taught curriculum, 15 percent of staff disagrees, and 30 percent is undecided. This evidence demonstrates that the majority of staff agrees, but uncertainty exists because the curriculum is in the process of being updated. Opportunities that enable staff to meet regularly and to impact curriculum coordination include grades 9-12 monthly department meetings, grades 5-12 department meetings (for departments that have program supervisors), early release days, professional days, and teacher observations. Teachers in each department have common learning activities, performance tasks, and assessments, which is evidenced in the written curriculum. Although there is clear alignment in many of the courses, there are more formal opportunities to ensure the correlation between what is written and what is taught in departments with appointed program supervisors, who are both experts in the curriculum and evaluators of their staff. Departments with only non-evaluating heads have to rely much more on the professionalism of the staff to ensure that there is alignment, even without an assurance of common prep time to check in with each other. The social studies, world languages, ESL, and physical education departments, to name a few, demonstrate that the taught curriculum mirrors the written curriculum. For example, in social studies, the written curriculum for United States History I incorporates the historical time period from 1700 to 1875. This paves the path for the United States History II class to investigate the historical time period of 1875 to present day. In addition, in the world languages department, the curriculum depends on what is taught in the previous year. Without the Italian I written curriculum being taught, students would not be able to succeed in Italian II. Moreover, in the ESL department, the teacher adheres to the "Can Do" descriptors provided by the state. Each student is assessed yearly with a state provided tool (ACCESS Test) to evaluate the level of English proficiency, and then the curriculum is aligned with the "Can Do" descriptors. In all subjects, district-determined measures (DDMs) are aligned with the curriculum. Within the first month of school, teachers administer DDMs pre-assessments to measure students' progress against final DDMs assessments. Lastly, in the English, science, and physical education departments, overarching essential questions for each unit are posted in the rooms. Formal and informal assessments throughout each unit ensure that these unit goals are met. When all curricula have been updated through a formal process including the collection of data, clear and well-documented process is in place to ensure alignment between written and taught curriculum, students will be better prepared to meet with success as lifelong learners.

Sources of Evidence

- teachers
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Not all curricular areas indicate that effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among most academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district. Through interviews with faculty and administration, it is clear that the school district does not have a clearly identified curriculum review cycle, including time devoted to the development, review, and evaluation of the curriculum. Also, in these interviews it was communicated that the faculty does not spend time in collaboration activities (e.g., PLCs, critical friends groups, common planning time) within content areas, across content areas, and with sending schools for the purpose of articulation of the curriculum. In interviews with grades 9-12, the students feel that there is continuity between science, English and social studies courses when they transitioned from 8th to 9th grade, however, they feel that they lacked certain mathematical skills as freshmen. In the self-study, the faculty states that program supervisors and teachers work to ensure vertical articulation of curriculum between grades and from the sending school, Central Middle School. All departments follow the state, national, or international standards for their discipline, which vertically scaffold expectations. Many departments spend meeting time formalizing the development of skills for each grade level, as evidenced by the English department's vertical charts for grammar, writing skills, and vocabulary development. These documents demonstrate the ongoing work within departments (grades 5-12) to ensure consistent implementation of standards and smooth transition from course to course. Because these remain unpublished, are formatted inconsistently, and are completed to varying degrees between departments, they reflect the formative nature of this process. However, the curriculum is not completely updated in the Rubicon Atlas online curriculum program. The district is in the process of developing a formal review cycle for curriculum; however, departments reflect on their implementation of the curriculum occasionally during department meetings, and they are supported with time and resources when adjustments are needed. Structures in place to support these processes include monthly departmental 9-12 meetings and occasional 5-12 department meetings led by program supervisors of each core content area. These department meetings are often used to coordinate lessons and assessments with grade-alike partners as well as to develop and assess DDMs. Professional development (PD) opportunities further support district and teacher priorities as evidenced by an English Grammar PD (2015) and the social studies Document-Based Question Writing PD (2015). Non-core subject areas also meet regularly, but because of the lack of full-time program supervisors, there is a lack of formal coordination. When teachers create a multifaceted curriculum, including a formal review process, vertical articulation with sending schools, coordination between and among all academic areas within the school, students will develop a growth mindset for advancing their educational opportunities.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school leadership

Standard 2 Indicator 6

Conclusions

Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center do not currently meet the curricular demands of all school programs, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities. According to the Endicott survey, 40 percent of the staff say the school has sufficient professional staff to implement the curriculum including the co-curricular program and other learning opportunities. Although class sizes vary and schedule issues drive numbers, staffing levels are currently sufficient in most disciplines. Although some teachers report that class size is too large, evidence suggests that the class size is adequate; the current student-to-teacher ratio is 14.36:1. As presented in the Endicott survey, it shows that the current student-to-staffing ratio is 11.4:1. While the recorded ratio is low, the Endicott survey reflects that only 40 percent of the professional staff agrees that the school has enough professional staff to implement the curriculum. Specifically, the math and art teachers do not believe staffing levels are sufficient in their department. Also, the art department has caps of 24 or higher for several classes, which limits what can be done in certain courses. In terms of extracurricular activities, however, staffing levels are adequate. The number of staff dedicated to coaching and advising clubs enables a large number of sports (25) and clubs (25) to support a wide variety of after-school activities.

According to the Endicott survey, 47 percent of the staff reports the school has sufficient instructional materials to implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities, whereas 80 percent of students and 77 percent of parents feel there is sufficient instructional materials to implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities. According to the Endicott survey, 40 percent of the staff reports the facilities fully support the implementation of the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs, and other learning opportunities. Instructional materials are adequate in supply and support the curriculum. The Endicott survey indicates that 77 percent of parents and 80 percent of students strongly agree that they have enough books and materials in the classroom to enable effective teaching and learning. The district has been able to fund changes in materials to allow the school to acquire new texts and technology necessary to meet new standards and to adjust to recent changes to the Advanced Placement curricula and testing. Many teachers implemented Google Classroom during the 2015-2016 school year. This platform allows students and teachers to collaborate electronically on class materials and educational topics. In addition to electronic resources, print resources are adequately available. The school also provides a basic amount of paper and office supplies to support the classroom needs.

In interviews with the Curriculum Standard Subcommittee members and students during a facility tour, teachers and students stated that there are mobile Chromebook carts for core subjects but electives have to share a mobile cart. The school provides adequate technology, equipment, and supplies to support the curriculum. The technology department has transitioned from local servers to cloud-based data storage and is in the process of adding more Chromebooks and computers. The number of Chromebook carts increased during the 2016-2017 school year. Each core academic department has at least one iPad or Chromebook cart, with many departments having two carts or more. Elective courses have access to two elective Chromebook carts. Academic departments, such as English and social studies, believe that multiple Chromebook carts are needed per department to effectively implement curriculum in a technological world. Thus, social studies has two carts; English has three. The high school provides Wi-Fi access across the entire building and now supports teachers' computers and students' iPads/Chromebooks. According to the Endicott survey, 80 percent of students say that they have sufficient access to computers. However, issues with Wi-Fi strength and accessibility still present issues. For example, curriculum is negatively impacted when teachers and students cannot access the Internet during a class lesson, and guest speakers cannot access the Wi-Fi to present their material. Most core classrooms have a SMARTBoard for effective curriculum delivery. The district has also added an instructional technology integration specialist to support both teacher and student training needs to integrate the new technology as part of an effective learning experience. In an interview with the Curriculum Standard Subcommittee members, teachers discussed the lack of funding for the following departments: PE equipment is broken, math has outdated texts but the teachers are willing to share materials.

According to the Endicott survey, 60 percent of students say their teachers assign work that requires them to use information and do research in the library/media center. The library/media center has made tremendous improvements over the past five years; it now provides an adequate level of resources to support the curriculum. The library/media and technology specialist has since updated print texts in the library so it can support the National History Day competition and can offer wider selections for current, popular fiction, and nonfiction works. Also, the library/media and technology specialist has created a new school library website with pages for research and study skills. She has created and compiled resources and taught lessons regarding online research resources, databases and reference materials. In addition, the library/media and technology space is well utilized before and after school, as well as throughout the school day for teacher-directed work and independent student learning. The Endicott survey shows that 52 percent of parents believe that the library provides a wide range of materials, technology, and other information services.

According to the Endicott survey, 54 percent of parents believe that the school's facility adequately supports its programs and services, yet only 40 percent of the staff believe this to be true due to the age of the building that was constructed in the 1960s. Parents indicate that the facilities are adequate to support the curriculum and co-curricular activities to meet the needs of successful curriculum delivery and co-curricular facilitation. To remedy previous facility problems in the science department, the facilities department fixed the emergency wash stations located within certain science classrooms; this repair enables classes to perform specific lab assignments. Moreover, the theater and art display areas are adequate to support theater and fine arts programs. Students stated how the lack of funding for drama and sports negatively impacts their participation in both programs and sports compared to students at other schools.

As a result of adequate staffing levels, instructional resources including technology, equipment, supplies, library, media, and with the full implementation of the curriculum, students' learning is positively impacted to achieve the school's academic and civic goals.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- students
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Indicator 7

Conclusions

Coordinated professional development for the school's professional staff and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research is not a prioritized practice at Stoneham High School. According to the Endicott survey, only 18 percent of staff say there is sufficient time to be engaged in formal curriculum evaluation, review, and revision work. According to the Endicott survey, 56 percent of staff report they are directly involved in curriculum evaluation, review and revision work. In interviews with teachers on the Curriculum Standard Subcommittee, teachers stated that many work together on curriculum during the school day and/or out of the classroom on their time. The ELL teachers has taken PD to work on curriculum, but would like additional curricular writing time. Curriculum revision, review and evaluation is teacher-driven and not administered throughout the school year by administration. Summer PD stipends on curriculum evaluation and revision has been prioritized by administration. In recent years, little attention has been given to the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum guides at the upper administrative level. With the hiring of the new director of curriculum, there was a push in the summer of 2016 to address the need for both new and updated curriculum guides. In accordance with the teacher contract, teachers can request to write curriculum when opportunities are posted by the central office. In the spring of 2016, approximately 19 curriculum writing opportunities were posted for various courses for the high school. This is in contrast to 2015 when postings were for fifth grade curriculum writing only. Teachers are given PDPs and some financial compensation (if done outside of the school day) for their work as detailed in the teacher contract. The district has a professional development committee, comprised of administrators and teachers, to oversee both in- and out-of-district professional development opportunities. In recent years, PD opportunities have been focused on technology and ELL. There is a need for more department-specific, curriculum-focused PD opportunities. The only recent option was in the spring of 2015 when the English department offered a departmental workshop to study grammar for the new SAT and to develop a vertical chart of what each grade should cover. Teachers who write curriculum outside of the school day are provided with financial compensation; however any writing, evaluation, or revisions during the school day, such as during a professional day, are only awarded PDPs. Any curriculum work done during meetings does not qualify for financial compensation. If a teacher chooses to attend a PD opportunity in regards to curriculum development, evaluation, or revision, the teacher is reimbursed (up to \$750) just like any other PD opportunity.

Current research is used by some departments in the process of developing, evaluating, and revising the curriculum. The social studies department has used the following programs to inform decisions regarding curriculum: Primary Source, Facing History and Ourselves, Teaching Tolerance, the Center of Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Salem State, and the Document-Based Question project. Over half of the staff reported that they do feel directly involved in the process of writing and revising curriculum. Curriculum guides are written by teachers for teachers. When curriculum is developed, evaluated, and revised, data from assessments such as DDMs, MCAS, AP exams, and SATs are taken into account. A world languages teacher reported using the breakdown of task scores to alter both the content and order of the curriculum to help students with their conversational speaking skills, a weakness of the class as reported by College Board.

In addition to assessments and current research, some departments use student feedback to make changes to their curriculum. Physical education teachers use end-of-the-year surveys to alter the curriculum for the following year. English teachers have adjusted their curriculum based on feedback provided by students as well. Student feedback through a yearly survey has been essential to developing, evaluating, and revising the English department's summer reading assignments.

When the district prioritizes the development, evaluation and revision of curriculum in the staff's professional development plan, providing sufficient time, resources for ongoing collaboration, and reviews using assessment results, students will better build on their knowledge and skills achieved through the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 2 Commendations

Commendation

The development of an online curriculum using a common template for all curricular areas

Commendation

The instructional materials, technology, equipment, facilities, and resources of the library/media center that sufficiently support the current curriculum

Commendation

The clear articulation of the 21st century learning expectations and school-wide rubrics

Commendation

The curriculum that supports the informed and ethical use of technology

Standard 2 Recommendations

Recommendation

Prioritize staff professional development to work on curriculum development and ongoing revisions

Recommendation

Develop cross-curricular lesson development opportunities across all disciplines

Recommendation

Address the lack of professional development opportunities in the area of technology and current educational research trends

Recommendation

Develop a formal curriculum review cycle devoted to the development, review, and evaluation of the curriculum across all content areas

Recommendation

Strategically implement a process to move from an informal to formal process to ensure the alignment of the taught and written curriculum

Recommendation

Complete all curriculum on Rubicon Atlas

Standard 3 Indicator 1

Conclusions

Teachers' instructional practices are informally examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations. During the 2015-2016 school year, the staff at Stoneham High School worked to update their core values and learning expectations. Once these expectations were in place, the staff continued their work to connect instruction to core values and learning expectations. This process was rooted in an informal approach by departments to review their instructional practices and to ensure consistency with the new 21st century expectations. The school's four identified beliefs and expectations about learning are posted in the front lobby, main office, library, and classrooms. Every teacher that has a classroom was given a copy of the core values and learning expectations. Although there is some evidence of direct and explicit connections between core values and learning expectations with assignment learning objectives, the core values and expectations are not explicitly linked to specific instructional practices. Teachers reported that the core values and beliefs are inherently linked, but not formally discussed in relation to lessons or assignments. For example, one English teacher stated that one core value, "integrity," is referenced when discussing proper citing and avoidance of plagiarism. In another instance, the National History Day project requires students to complete research to prove a thesis, but does not explicitly state that they are completing learning expectation 3. According to some students, teachers informally and infrequently reference the SHS core values and beliefs and that they are implied when working with specific tasks, but they are not explicitly clear. While the instruction/learning expectation connection has lacked visibility, the school has made progress in developing a platform for assessing these implied expectations. Teachers at SHS have developed department-wide rubrics geared to measure student progress toward these expectations at least twice a year. When instructional practices are formally examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, students will be aware of what is expected of them and commit themselves to their learning experiences in more meaningful ways.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- facility tour
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 2

Conclusions

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

The majority of teachers' instructional practices show a dedication to personalized classroom instruction. According to the Endicott survey, 73 percent of teachers personalize instruction to support the achievement of the learning expectations. Specifically, an Italian teacher who teaches more than one level in one period outlines expectations for each level of students in her course syllabus and on specific assignments. In addition, some Spanish teachers give students learning style quizzes in September to better address each student's specific learning needs. Many English teachers meet regularly with students, particularly during flexible instruction time, to address individual learning needs during the writing process. According to a variety of students, teachers frequently check to determine if the pacing of the class is helping learners to meet expectations. The same students report that history teachers frequently offer choices in assessment styles. For example, students can choose if they would rather write an essay or take a quiz on a given topic. One history teacher asked her students to respond to the prompt, "when someone makes me angry I feel..." and connected the emotional responses students gave to the survivors of the Rowanda Genocide. Personalization is also showcased through the contemporary issues course where students are able to select the topics they would like to learn about.

In some areas, teachers make informal connections across disciplines. According to students, the readings and poems they analyze in English class have similar themes to the topics they are studying in history courses. In a chemistry course, students read the article, "Chemistry of Food Coloring," to learn about the concepts of color absorption and reflection and relate this with the psychology discipline in how color influences food choice. The SHS Shakespeare Festival makes connections to the culinary arts program by offering the choice of creating an Elizabethan dessert, to the video production course by allowing students to act out a soliloquy through video media, and to the arts by offering choice in creating a rap, a music video, or in designing a set. During a classroom observation, one history teacher had students analyze a quote and interpret its relation to the Rowanda Genocide.

Teachers' instructional practices regularly engage students as both active participants and self-directed learners. History teachers challenge students with a variety of literacy strategies including: the Gather/Engage/Create technique, building document based arguments, and holding debates around current events to help students actively learn historical concepts. Biology teachers use a case study approach to help students actively engage in ecological concepts in a real life scenario. World languages teachers assess student participation in the target language using a participation rubric. Students are responsible for participating, assessing their own participation, and making goals to improve participation in the upcoming quarter. The same teachers also utilize literature circles in which students work cooperatively in a self-directed context to analyze a text.

By design, teachers' instructional practices frequently emphasize inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking. Early U.S. and modern U.S. social studies teachers structure their curriculum using the National History Day model. Students pick a topic related to a theme, develop and prove a thesis statement, and identify the importance of the event by building a project using independently researched sources. The project is then presented to a panel of judges. These teachers also use Document-Based Questions in their classes where students are required to use sources to build an evidence-based argument. One history teacher was observed asking her students about the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation and how these two terms relate to themes in both the current unit being studied and their personal lives. Biology teachers use an enzyme lab to address a problem that students help format with respect to the scientific process. The students then form a hypothesis, do the experiment, and record data. Observations and data interpretation involves responding to higher order thinking questions. According to the Endicott survey, 77 percent of staff and 70 percent of parents

agree that teachers emphasize inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking skills. Teachers regularly ask students to apply knowledge to other experiences and situations outside of the classroom. In their business class, students learned different aspects of how a business is formed, grows, operates, and competes in the free market economy by creating a business plan and pitching their model to potential investors, imitating the "Shark Tank" model. Students involved in culinary arts courses learn all aspects of running a restaurant business by managing "Sparty's Cafe" which is operated and run by students. Through the guidance office, students have the opportunity to participate with a nurse shadow program at a local hospital. Students also are asked to engage in meaningful project work that lead to formal presentations. This is evident specifically in one English class where students are asked to look at rhetoric in texts related to the 1969 moon landing. Students analyzed rhetoric and in groups, developed an argument to present to the class using mixed media.

Students are frequently asked to engage in self-assessment and reflection of their progress toward meeting learning expectations. This is evident in the aforementioned 1969 moon landing project. While students presented their arguments, each peer audience member was responsible for giving specific feedback related to their argument and to their presentation style. Then, the students had a whole class discussion on their strengths and weaknesses of their presentations and how to improve their skills for the next time they present. Multiple English teachers use self-evaluation forms during the writing process to help students improve the craft of writing. Students report that many teachers utilize Google Classroom as a mode of allowing for peer and self-assessment during the learning process.

A majority of teachers integrate technology into their instructional and learning practices. The Endicott survey reports that 75 percent of students agree that teachers ask for use of technology in academic assignments. In interactions and interviews with teachers, it is apparent that sufficient professional development regarding technology has been provided including several teachers becoming Google certified teachers, faculty attending the Mass Cue conference, and internal professional development opportunities regarding the current available technology in Stoneham High School. According to some students, laptops, computer labs, and Chromebook carts are all available for use any time a student needs to use one. One math teacher reports that approximately 70 percent of her course requires the use of a Chromebook or computer. A history teacher had a Chromebook cart available for use to review *New York Times* articles. The library media specialist has recently submitted a grant to acquire a 3D printer in order to collaborate with the culinary arts teacher and the computer science teacher. Because Stoneham High School teachers' instructional practices support achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by personalizing instruction, emphasizing inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking, applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, engaging students in self-assessment and reflection, and integrating technology, students are offered a variety of real world learning experiences that link classroom learning to authentic life-based achievements; and when opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning and activities to engage students as active and self-directed learners are increased and formalized then instructional practices will fully support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations .

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey

Standard 3 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Teachers occasionally adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by using formative assessment, especially during instructional time, infrequently strategically differentiate, and frequently purposefully organizing group learning activities and provide additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom.

Teachers at Stoneham High School occasionally use formative assessments during instructional time to assess student learning. In an informal survey, at least 50 percent of the teachers state that they use formative assessment strategies on a weekly basis. The use of formative assessments during instruction are noted in some world languages classes in which teachers utilize journals for students to respond to open-ended prompts that showcase their grasp of a particular concept. Several teachers in math and world languages classes utilize "do now" tasks that are collected and reviewed to assess student learning to determine if students are ready to move on to the following skill. Many English teachers offer checklists and editing guides to assess students during the writing process. According to the Stoneham High School self-study, several teachers in the science and world languages departments routinely use summarizers at the end of each lesson to assess the comprehension of a given concept.

Infrequently, teachers analyze these formative assessments to devise and employ instructional strategies to help individual students with a specific skill. According to the Endicott survey, 54 percent parents feel that their son/daughter's teacher modify their instructional practices based on student progress, specifically in achieving 21st century learning expectations. Although many teachers explained examples of when they used formative assessments during lessons, many classroom observations and conversations with teachers showed that data from these formative assessments do not drive adjustments to instruction. When pressed for more information regarding what teachers do with the data they collect from formative assessments, many teachers comment that they re-teach the concept. For example, in multiple classes teachers use Kahoot to download student results of multiple choice questions. However, it was unclear how the teacher used this data to make immediate and enduring adjustments to instruction aside from re-teaching the material.

Often, teachers' instructional practices use purposeful organization of group learning activities. According to the Endicott survey, 84 percent of students agree that group activities are used in their classes. Specifically, one math teacher groups students according to varied abilities to allow students who have a strong grasp of a concept to guide struggling students. Additionally, some teachers in various subjects ask students of different ability levels to collaborate in order to promote opportunities for students to learn from their peers. In another example, several world languages teachers use literary circles dissect literature and other relevant texts in which each student may have a specific role according to their specific strength as a learner. Additionally, teachers use peer-to-peer collaboration opportunities to assist students in developing the skills to effectively work in groups. This is showcased in Socratic seminars in English classrooms when teachers explain how to tell when it is an appropriate time to speak during a conversation and how to comment on another student's opinion.

Frequently, teachers' instructional practices provide additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom. According to the Endicott survey, 77 percent of parents agree that teachers provide additional support when needed. This support is evident in the flexible instruction time built into student schedules. During this time, teachers offer extra help, give makeup quizzes, or provide other support necessary to all students. Teachers routinely provide students with additional supports such as study guides to help prepare for summative assessments, graphic organizers to aid in the writing or speaking process, and skeleton notes to aid in note-taking during class. Several teachers utilize Google Sites and share practice activities and other resources with their students. One student comments that one history teacher frequently sends emails to her students with interesting and relevant articles over the weekend or on snow days to allow students to further practice concepts learned in class and to relate them to authentic topics. Another student explains that his/her relationships with teachers allows them to feel comfortable seeking after-school help regarding academic topics. Finally, teachers make use of Google Classroom and Google Sites to assist in student learning outside of the physical classroom.

When Stoneham High School teachers adjust instructional practices to meet the needs of each student, frequently and consistently use formative assessment during instructional time, strategically differentiate and purposefully organizing group learning activities, while providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom, students learn to work and participate effectively in learning experiences that best promote their individual learning.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Teachers at SHS, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices, by using student achievement data from a variety of assessments including examining student work, using feedback from a variety of sources; current research; engaging in reflective professional discourse and using feedback from a variety of sources that includes teachers, students and parents.

Teachers at Stoneham High School use assessment data to improve their instructional practices. According to the Endicott survey, 77 percent of teachers use assessment data to meet student educational needs. All departments, according to an assistant principal, should currently be using district determined measures (DDMs) to establish goals and to review their instructional practice. Some departments such as English, utilize pre-and-post assessments to assess student readiness levels in writing and then refocus the instruction to address weak areas in student achievement for the first semester. Science uses data to determine areas of improvement that need to be addressed. Based on research through an academic blog, a science teacher brought changes to a comprehensive laboratory rubric. Student feedback to improve instructional strategies is also evidenced in a survey given in math classes. According to the staff, a large percentage of the opportunities to review work and innovate changes comes from an informal process centered on time outside of formally structured periods. The English teachers have examined new changes made in the SAT in regards to grammar. According to the Endicott survey, and confirmed in the self-study and teacher interviews, 46 percent of the teachers claim that there is not enough formal opportunities to examine student work. Teachers frequently receive and use feedback from a wide cross section of the school community. Teachers benefit from both formal and informal evaluations from administrators, students, other teachers and parents. A leading example of this would be teachers in the world languages and math departments who give students an end-of-year survey asking for feedback pertaining to teaching strategies, materials, student-centered activities and suggestions for improvement.

Teachers at Stoneham High School utilize a wide variety of current research to improve both their instructional practices and their knowledge of their content. These resources include professional journals, academic websites, blogs, professional development organizations and visiting professionals. The history department participates in Primary Source, a professional development organization advancing best practices and current research in global education. Nearly all of the history department take courses through Primary Source and through the Document-Based Question Project. The world languages teachers will attend the American Council of Teacher Foreign Language conference and several scheduled workshops this year. Teachers largely engage in individualistic self-directed educational development at Stoneham High School. Although the school has offered some professional development opportunities such as a presentation by a health professional on student anxiety and a seminar on drug abuse, most of the professional development opportunities, are driven by the program directors and the teachers themselves. Teacher initiated professional development include a chemistry teacher joining Chemical Educational X Change, a weekly academic chemistry blog. Formal time allotted for department members to share best practices, review lesson plans and assessments is limited to a once monthly department meeting. However, a new curriculum director has built a professional development website for staff to utilize to find opportunities for professional development both in and out of district. As a result of teachers, individually and collaboratively, improving their instructional practices by engaging in professional collaboration, examining student work and using feedback from a variety of stakeholders, students will benefit because learning experiences will be more reflective of individual student needs and interests.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Indicator 5

Conclusions

The majority of teachers at Stoneham High School, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices. The vast majority of the teaching staff at Stoneham High School are dedicated and lifelong learners. Most teachers have a master's degree with three teachers holding doctoral degrees. Teachers have taken advantage of their yearly professional development days to increase proficiency in their subject areas. Stoneham High School teachers have engaged in a wide variety of professional content-based development including technology training programs, post-graduate courses, workshops, national conferences, in-house professional development programs and professional organizations. Teachers in music, world languages, English and history have participated in post-graduate classes; while teachers in history and science are part of professional interactive web platforms that provide opportunities for the staff to advance in the knowledge of their content and its instructional practices. The library media specialist attended the MassCue Conference, a forum dedicated to utilizing technology in education. The district also has a director of instructional technology who is a resource for training teachers in the ever-changing world of educational technology. An outstanding example of this lifelong dedication to learning is the music teacher using her acceptance into the Metropolitan Chorale of Brookline to bring her personal experience in training to the students of Stoneham High School. According to the Endicott survey, all groups (students -79 percent, staff - 86 percent, parents - 69 percent) overwhelmingly agree that the teaching staff are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. When teachers are reflective practitioners who maintain expertise in both their content area and instructional practices, students benefit through a continually improving learning environment driven by practitioners who model lifelong learning.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- parents
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 3 Commendations

Commendation

The use of MCAS data and student achievement data to improve instructional practices for the upcoming school year

Commendation

The dedication of staff to maintaining expertise in both content area and pedagogy

Commendation

The opportunities for students to engage in self-directed learning

Commendation

The high level of skills and knowledge expected by teachers for authentic tasks

Commendation

The opportunities for students to assess themselves and to be reflective on their learning progress

Commendation

The development of school wide-rubrics, department rubrics and common assessments which enable the school community to measure progress toward achieving 21st century learning expectations

Commendation

The emphasis of inquiry and critical thinking embedded in the taught curriculum

Standard 3 Recommendations

Recommendation

Formally examine instructional practices to ensure consistency with school's core values and 21st century learning expectations across all departments

Recommendation

Formalize a process that will assist teachers in developing and integrating more cross-discipline learning in the curriculum

Recommendation

Create a long-term plan that will continue to prioritize the integration of technology into all areas of instruction

Recommendation

Discuss and establish a process to implement formal professional development opportunities for teachers to engage in professional discourse in targeted performance areas

Recommendation

Develop a school-wide process on how to use data from formative assessments to drive improvements to instruction

Standard 4 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The professional staff has begun to employ a formal process to assess individual student success in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations using school-wide analytic rubrics. However, the school does not yet have a formal process to measure individual student progress from year to year or to assess school-wide progress in achieving the school's learning expectations. Each department has taken responsibility for assessing student achievement on one of the standards, which is reported out on quarterly report cards. Some content areas have adapted the school-wide rubrics for their learner expectation into a common rubric that can be applied to a variety of types of assessments. For example, the math and science departments developed a common rubric for problem solving, which is used to assess students' abilities to develop multiple solutions to a problem. In algebra classes, students completed a quadratic function problem, while in science, teachers used the same rubric to assess students' lab work. Similarly, world languages teachers have developed a common rubric that is closely aligned to the school-wide rubric for communication, which is used across all languages to assess student performance on oral presentations. In social studies, all students participate in the National History Day project, which provides teachers with an opportunity to assess students' abilities to use appropriate technology and tools to access, evaluate and effectively apply information. It is clear that many teachers have made efforts to link their assessment processes to the learning expectations on a regular basis. For example, the art department uses a rubric for an ugly doll project that includes learning expectations two and five, even though this department is only responsible for assessing learning expectation five. Students report that they almost always receive rubrics prior to assessments that help them to understand the expectations, but some of these rubrics are specific to the course-specific learning goals rather than being directly tied to the school-wide rubrics for learning expectations. Students and parents confirm that they have received reporting on individual students' achievement in regard to these learning expectations this year. Due to the fact that some students' course loads do not include courses which assess certain learning expectations, gaps may exist in which students are not being evaluated on a certain learning expectation. At this time, teachers are unsure how the information regarding the 21st century learning expectations is being tracked by the school or how students' progress will be measured. The school does not yet have a formal process for assessing school-wide progress on the learning expectations. When professional staff employs a formal process based on the school-wide analytic rubrics, both individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations can be accurately assessed.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- students
- parents
- department leaders

Standard 4 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school's professional staff has begun to communicate individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families and the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community. While the school has communicated, developed and implemented 21st century learning expectations recently, many teachers are already using newly developed rubrics to help students progress toward meeting these 21st century learning expectations. Despite the progress, however, the school has not yet developed a formal process to evaluate the results of student progress on these 21st century learning expectations, nor has the school developed a formal process for reporting student progress on the 21st century learning expectations to the school community. Each department is responsible for teaching one of the five 21st century learning expectations. As an example, the math and science departments are responsible for learning expectation one, in which students analyze problems and present solutions to them in innovative and diverse ways. Prior to the start of the school year, parents and guardians received a welcome letter informing them of the school's 21st century learning expectations and identifying ways that parents and guardians can help students meet those expectations. Students receive a copy of the student handbook, which identifies the school's 21st century learning expectations. Throughout the year, parents and guardians are informed of student progress through notifications on PowerSchool, report cards, meetings, parent teacher conferences, electronic messages and Back-to-School Night. Both students and parents reported being aware of the school's 21st century learning expectations. The expectations are posted on a large banner which hangs in front of the main office, which students pass each morning in order to enter the school. Students are also informed of their progress toward meeting the 21st century learning expectations in a formal report, distributed at the end of each term (quarterly). When the school's professional staff communicates individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families and the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community, students, their families, and the school community will better understand how they and their school are progressing toward meeting the learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- students
- parents
- central office personnel

Standard 4 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Professional staff inconsistently collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. Individually, teachers report that they examine data from formative and summative assessments in an informal way to help their students achieve the academic goals of their classes. Teachers report that they use data to respond to student difficulties, such as when a group of students are making a common grammar error in their written work or when they are tracking results toward their student learning goal using DDMs. The program supervisor in the science department indicated that she reviews the overall results on the Biology MCAS exam with all of the teachers in the science department but that the biology teachers and the earth science teachers who share responsibility for student success on that exam examine the results in a much more in-depth process. Several teachers suggested that there is little time available during the school day to collaborate with members of their departments, while other teachers say that they work frequently with their grade-alike teaching partners, either informally throughout the day or during formal departmental meeting time. Although there are four early release days scheduled throughout the school year for professional development purposes, only one of those days is typically available for departments to work together on a task such as examining data. In the self-study report, SHS also points out that they identify those students whose MCAS results require that the school implement an Educational Proficiency Plan. When professional staff consistently collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data, the school will be better able to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- school leadership

Standard 4 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Prior to each unit of study, teachers are beginning to communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed. While students do report that teachers provide related unit-specific learning goals prior to a unit, students also report that teachers are less consistent in terms of communicating specific 21st century learning expectations in each course. Even though the school's 21st century learning expectations are relatively new, many teachers have already begun to incorporate lessons designed to teach these 21st century learning expectations. For example, world languages teachers are responsible for learning expectation four: "students think critically and communicate clearly and effectively." To assess this learning expectation, students are evaluated on brief oral presentations in the world language on a quarterly basis. As part of the presentation, students present to the class, then answer questions from other students. Students are evaluated by a scoring rubric distributed to students prior to the assessment. The teacher reports providing modeling of the oral presentation prior to the assessment. Goals, learning standards, and enduring understandings are often posted in the classroom and/or handed out to students. In addition, more detailed unit-specific learning goals are provided to students in the form of essential questions, content descriptions, and associated unit-specific skills. However, this is not done on a consistent basis from class to class or between departments. World languages teachers, in addition to assessing students' ability to communicate orally, assess written communication as well, usually two to three times per student per quarter. These teachers use a common writing rubric that states and assesses students on the school's 21st century learning expectations. When teachers communicate to students the applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed, students will understand and be able to work toward these learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- students

Standard 4 Indicator 5

Conclusions

Prior to summative assessments, teachers regularly provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success, such as corresponding rubrics, which define targeted areas of achievement. Students are provided with rubrics in advance of assessments, providing students with the opportunity to discuss the rubrics with the teacher prior to initiating the project/assignment. Students report using the rubrics as helpful tools in terms of understanding expectations for assessments. Students report that the use of rubrics is common in all classes, both core classes and elective classes. According to the Endicott survey, 71 percent of students understand in advance the expectations of teachers through the use of rubrics, with 74 percent of the students reporting that teachers use rubrics to assess student work across the curriculum. For example, the social studies department provides all students participating in National History Day the common rubric for their final project. The English department also utilizes rubrics on written summative assessments, and the world languages department uses rubrics on both oral and written assessments. The special education department has developed and implemented detailed rubrics which address multiple components, ranging from writing to academic readiness, executive functioning and behavior. Beyond the core classes, students are also provided with rubrics in elective courses. In an economics elective course, students were provided with a rubric for a "Shark Tank" project in which students created a business then pitched the business plan to a group of community members. The vast majority of the rubrics collected use qualitative descriptions at different levels of performance, while a small number of the rubrics were checklists that assigned a points value to the varying components of the assignment. When teachers provide students with specific and measurable criteria for success, students are able to understand the requirements for a successful product and can clarify with the teacher the specific criteria to create such a product.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- students

Standard 4 Indicator 6

Conclusions

In each unit of study, teachers generally employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments. Every department has curriculum documents in Rubicon Atlas that include at least one formative and summative assessment per unit, although teachers report that these documents are not always up to date. Teachers and students report widespread use of a variety of formative assessments. For example, teachers employ Socratic discussions, think-pair-shares, and quizzes to regularly assess reading comprehension. Some teachers report the use of homework, daily activators, mid-class timeouts, or exit tickets to assess whether students are ready to move on to the next concept. In physical education classes, teachers use pedometers to track students' participation level in physical activity and administer regular flexibility tests throughout the year. In a math class, students practiced geometry problems after a brief teacher lecture. The teacher circulated around the classroom as students were working. After several minutes of student work time, the teacher called on specific students to explain how each student solved the problem. Students were able to revise their work if they had made a mistake the first time. Other such formative assessment was witnessed in a food and nutrition class. In the particular class period, students had been tasked with preparing pizza dough. In preparation for this process, the teacher linked the class to students' prior knowledge by asking students what yeast products could be purchased at a supermarket. The purpose of her question was to prepare students for an upcoming quiz on which a nearly identical question would be asked. In the case of longer projects, such as the National History Day project or formal essays, both teachers and students have described a process that involves check-ins at critical junctures along the way, and there is evidence in the student work as well as from student interviews that students receive feedback from teachers throughout that allows them to make adjustments and improve their work. Teachers also employ technology to administer assessments, using Google Docs to monitor students' written work as well as electronic games, such as Quizlet and Kahoot, to assess student understanding. AP teachers and students have access to the Albert program, which allows them to track student progress using prompts modeled after AP exams. In several classroom observations, however, formative assessment was limited, consisting only of a few students who voluntarily responded to questions. In the Endicott survey, only 26 percent of teachers report using formative assessments to drive instruction multiple times per day. There is widespread evidence in the student work and shared during teacher interviews that teachers across disciplines are using a variety of summative assessments, including research assignments, different types of essays, oral presentations, inquiry-based science labs, and creative projects that allow students to demonstrate their learning beyond traditional paper and pencil tests. Many of these assessments are long term and also include a degree of student choice and independence. There are also examples of authentic assessments, such as a Shark Tank project and a solar study. When teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments, students are more likely to be successful in achieving the academic objectives set by the 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- student shadowing
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 7

Conclusions

Teachers have begun to collaborate on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments; however, the lack of formal collaboration limits teachers' ability to analyze and revise formative and summative assessments. According to the Endicott survey, just 48 percent of teachers meet formally to discuss and provide formative and summative assessments. Collaboration is inconsistent across departments. For example, the art department has formal monthly meetings to discuss curriculum and assessments within the high school department as well as curriculum as a whole from elementary through high school. Although the math department meets formally, time is not always spent discussing or revising formative or summative assessments, including common assessments. The social studies department collaborates less formally, often discussing curriculum during lunch or during common preparation time when this exists. There is no formal process for the creation, analysis and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments. There are several reasons for the lack of formal collaboration. First, the school schedule is not conducive to formal collaboration, as teachers' preparation periods are not always in sync with those of their grade-level colleagues, meaning that much collaboration often happens in a less formal manner. Second, many teachers teach singleton classes. This makes revision of assessments more difficult, since such teachers are not able to compare their data to that of their colleagues. Third, because there is no formal, set time for teachers to collaborate and no formal agenda for this time teachers are not clear as to the goals of this collaborative time and haven't yet been able to acquire meaningful data from their work. Teachers are unclear as to whether the collaboration should be between grade-level teachers or vertically with teachers who are instructing students at different grade levels. Due to this lack of clarity, formal collaboration time has not been prioritized. When teachers collaborate on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, teachers will be able to identify skills and concepts needed for improved instruction, helping students to achieve at a higher level.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 8

Conclusions

Teachers frequently provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work although these practices are not consistently utilized across departments. Teachers and students report regular use of Google Docs to provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to students during the writing process so that students can revise their work before submitting a final draft for grading. There is evidence in the student work samples that more involved projects, such as the National History Day project, are broken down into smaller components with check-ins along the way, and that students are given personalized specific feedback that identifies ways the students can improve their work. Students interviewed also expressed that most teachers return their work within a reasonable time frame and that they feel the teachers' feedback is helpful to them. In math classes, students have the opportunity to make corrections to their tests in order to improve their grades. One math teacher reported that he posts the correct answers as a do now at the beginning of class so that students can self-assess their areas of difficulty and work with peers to correct misunderstandings before giving them an opportunity to ask him clarifying questions. It does not appear that these practices are consistently utilized across departments and across all classrooms. In the Endicott survey, just over half of students feel that their teachers assess/correct their schoolwork in a reasonable amount of time and that their teachers offer suggestions to help improve their schoolwork. Some students interviewed reported that they have had some teachers who grade and return work at the very end of the marking term, which does not allow them an opportunity to utilize feedback. When teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback, students are able to revise and improve their work in order to be more successful in achieving learning objectives.

Sources of Evidence

- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 9

Conclusions

Teachers regularly use formative assessment, but it is less often used to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning. According to the Endicott survey, 86 percent of the teachers use formative assessments multiple times daily or weekly. However, only 26 percent of teachers report using formative assessments to drive instruction multiple times per day. Some teachers may re-teach if this is deemed necessary. For example, an Italian teacher realized that her students did not perform well on an assessment. The teacher then re-taught the necessary concepts over the next week of class, assigned students a Quizlet as a formative assessment, then re-assessed the students the following week. According to the teacher, student performance improved on the second assessment following the re-teaching of the necessary concepts. Another example illustrating the use of formative assessments occurred in a biology class. Analysis of MCAS data revealed that students struggled on open-response questions. In response, teachers began using open-response questions on each unit assessment to prepare students for the Biology MCAS Exam. After students were able to practice on the unit assessments, student performance improved on the open-response section of the biology exam. Students in social studies participate in National History Day (NHD) in grades 10 and 11. As part of NHD work, students complete and receive feedback on the rough draft. Students then use the feedback to create a final product. Though no formal data exists, social studies teachers report informally that student performance improves from grade 10 to grade 11, as students are more familiar with the NHD process in grade 11. Other examples of formative assessments include, but are not limited to, Kahoot, online assessment databases, and Google Forms. In classroom observations, however, there was limited use of whole-class formative assessment practices within individual lessons. In the multiple classes, the only evidence of formative assessment was "call and response." This method of formative assessment only checks the understanding of a very small number of students, and only those who volunteer. The teacher cannot determine whether the other students who do not respond understand the concepts or skills being taught. When teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning, students are more successful in meeting the targeted learning objectives.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- student work
- teachers
- department leaders

Standard 4 Indicator 10

Conclusions

Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine some evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice on a regular basis.

Teachers report individually examining student work and often reteaching concepts that students are struggling with. For example, an English teacher shared that she often gives a focus area such as requiring that students include a minimum number of a particular grammar construction in an essay then checking to be sure that the students are successfully able to execute that skill. If she finds that students do not do this successfully, she will re-teach the skill. Two world languages teachers gave examples of assessments that students did poorly on, and reported that they then went back to re-teach the relevant content. A math teacher reported that she assesses homework for accuracy and does not move on to a new lesson until the students are successfully completing the homework problems. While there were reports of select pairings of teachers who work fairly collaboratively in an informal way, there was little evidence of teachers looking at student work collaboratively using a formal process or protocol. Several teacher interviews revealed that teachers are often the only ones teaching a particular course, which limits opportunities for collaboration in this regard. Teachers and program supervisors also relate that during their departmental meeting time, it is difficult to coordinate collaborative examination of student work because such activities rarely apply to every teacher within the department.

In some departments and in some courses, teachers have common course and/or common grade-level assessments that they may examine together. For example, the English teachers reports that they often work with their grade-alike partners to examine the results of their DDMs around student responses to open-response questions. Again, however, the examination of common assessments varies depending on the subject area and individual teacher circumstances. Two math teachers reported that because they are the only ones teaching their particular course, they do not feel that examining results on common summative assessments, such as DDMs, have been very helpful to them in improving their teaching practice.

In world languages courses, where the teachers are each responsible for different languages, teachers report that the analysis of data is much more individual, but one teacher explained how she uses PowerSchool to isolate data on her student learning goal focused on student writing in order to track student progress. As this is the first year of implementation of assessment of students using the school-wide rubrics, teachers and program supervisors indicate that there has not yet been an opportunity to examine the data collaboratively so, at this point, there is no evidence that this student learning data has been used to adjust practice.

In some departments and some specific courses, teachers extensively examine standardized assessment results collaboratively in order to revise the curriculum and improve instructional practice on an annual basis. In several teacher interviews, English teachers reported that they spend a great deal of time collaboratively examining the results around MCAS and SAT exams. After noticing student weaknesses in open responses, the English program supervisor created anchor papers for open responses and worked with ninth and tenth grade English teachers to streamline instruction and assessment around this skill and providing clarity for students in how to answer an open-response question effectively. The English teachers report that the eleventh and twelfth grade teachers have done similar work around the SAT results. The program supervisor in science additionally related that she has worked extensively with the biology and earth science teachers to examine MCAS results. These ninth and tenth grade science teachers identified that students were struggling with the open-response questions so they created an instructional plan to teach students the necessary skills to break down the prompt and to interpret charts and graphs. In contrast, multiple teachers in the math department reported that they rarely spend time examining MCAS data or SAT data individually or collaboratively. Furthermore, in many departments, teachers do not have MCAS and SAT data that ties directly to their subject area. Because of this teachers in subjects such as social studies, world languages, and art report spending little or no time examining student results on standardized assessments.

In their self-study report, Stoneham High School indicates that student data, such as transcripts, test scores,

attendance, and teacher recommendations from the Central Middle School, is used to determine student level placement in the ninth grade. However, there is no evidence that Stoneham High School examines data from receiving schools and post-secondary institutions for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice. Furthermore, seniors take an exit survey when graduating which administration and guidance staff use to examine student opinions on their high school experience and to make necessary adjustments.

When teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine evidence of student learning they can better revise curriculum and improve instructional practice to target students' needs.

Sources of Evidence

- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- department leaders
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Indicator 11

Conclusions

Grading and reporting practices are reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning. Stoneham High School has developed a mission statement, and to align with the mission statement, Stoneham High School created five 21st century learning expectations, with each department assuming responsibility for teaching a different 21st century learning expectation. Stoneham High School has created separate rubrics for each of the five 21st century learning expectations. Students are assessed on a three point scale on each learning expectation. Student performance on each 21st century learning expectation is communicated to parents and guardians on student report cards. Teachers report that, since these learning expectations are relatively new, they are still becoming familiar with how to implement and report on student performance. There is no formal schedule for the review of reporting practices. Stoneham High School has recently implemented a new grading system, PowerSchool, which allows both parents and students to access grades as soon as the teacher inputs the assessment score. Both parents and students agree that grading practices are consistent across curricular areas. In order to ensure equity in grading, teachers have begun using common rubrics. One example of this is in world languages, where teachers use a common rubric to assess oral presentations. In addition, in the social studies departments, teachers use Document-Based Questions (DBQs) to evaluate students' ability to source, understand, and interpret primary and secondary source documents. Students are evaluated using nearly identical rubrics from one year to the next. Student and parent interviews reveal that students feel the grading practices at Stoneham High School are generally fair and consistent. When grading and reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning, there is a clear alignment between the content being taught in the classroom and the school's beliefs about learning.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- students
- parents
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 4 Commendations

Commendation

The use of school-wide rubrics to assess individual student success in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations using school-wide analytic rubrics

Commendation

The school's communication of individual student achievement on 21st century learning expectations to students and families through report cards

Commendation

The work of teachers to incorporate rubrics in alignment with the 21st century learning expectations and post unit-specific learning goals

Commendation

The widespread use of rubrics across all departments that define targeted high levels of achievement

Commendation

The wide variety of summative assessments used across disciplines that go beyond traditional tests, including ones that mimic authentic real-world tasks

Commendation

The use of technology for student writing and the incorporation of checkpoints during longer projects to facilitate the process of providing specific and timely feedback to students on their work

Commendation

The alignment to the school's core values and beliefs about learning in the teachers' grading practices

Standard 4 Recommendations

Recommendation

Implement a formal process to measure individual student progress over time and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations

Recommendation

Develop a formal process to aggregate and disseminate data to the school community related to the students' and the school's success in meeting the 21st century learning expectations

Recommendation

Provide additional opportunities for professional staff to engage in the formal process of collecting, disaggregating, and analyzing data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement

Recommendation

Create a system to ensure that all teachers communicate the applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed prior to each unit of study

Recommendation

Continue to work toward aligning the course-specific rubrics to the 21st century learning expectations

Recommendation

Emphasize more consistent and formal use of whole-class formative assessment strategies to improve instructional practices

Recommendation

Develop a protocol for formal collaboration sessions in which teachers create, analyze, and revise formative and summative assessments, including common assessments

Recommendation

Ensure specific, timely, and corrective feedback is consistently provided so that students always have the opportunity to revise and improve their work

Recommendation

Ensure that all teachers and administration spend time, both individually and collaboratively, examining data formally in order to revise curriculum and improve instructional practices

Recommendation

Create a system for teachers to regularly review grading practices to ensure that these practices reflect the school's core values and beliefs about learning

Standard 5 Indicator 1

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. The Stoneham High School community prides itself on having a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture. The school has many programs, clubs, and teams that help promote positive school culture and leadership. For example, the peer leadership program is comprised of a select group of juniors and seniors who are trained through the Anti-Defamation League, and strive to make the school community a welcoming, friendly, and accepting environment for all. Since there is only one section of the Peer Leadership class, each student is selected through a rigorous application process. These students organize and participate in school-wide assemblies, create school-wide bulletin boards, facilitate workshops for freshmen and sophomores, and attend special education classes each Friday to promote a safe and positive atmosphere within the school. Peer leaders also organize and participate in community service projects, with collecting and wrapping donated Christmas gifts for various Stoneham families being the most popular. Stoneham High School offers a variety of opportunities to promote and build a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture including Gay/Straight Alliance, student council, class officers, the advisory program, and sports captains. Stoneham High School also offers a variety of events that promote positive school culture including pep rallies for sports teams, Spartan Spirit Days, Thursday Trivia Challenges, Spartan of the week, Student of the Month, Day of Silence, Carnival Ball, proms, art and music festivals, drama performances, Diversity Week, and world languages night that celebrates school diversity. Each student is provided with a copy of the school committee approved student handbook at the beginning of each year. This handbook includes information about discipline and attendance policies, as well as 21st century learning standard rubrics, various clubs and activities for students. This year the first advisory meeting was comprised of games designed to reinforce the rules outlined in the handbook, and ninth grade students are invited to attend an orientation where they are provided with an opportunity to ask questions about these policies. In addition all students are required to sign a form acknowledging that they have received and read the handbook. The Stoneham High School mission statement is predominantly displayed throughout the school, and reiterates a shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all students. Based on the results from the 2016 Endicott survey, 91 percent of students feel safe at school, 89 percent of students feel teachers respect students, 79 percent of students respect one another, and 81 percent of students are proud to be a member of this community. These results indicate that the majority of the student body feels their school is a supportive community. Because the school community provides a safe, positive, respectful, supportive culture, students exhibit responsibility for learning and take ownership, pride, and meet high expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student work
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey
- school website

Standard 5 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school is an equitable and inclusive environment, and ensuring access to challenging academic experiences for all students, making sure that courses throughout the curriculum are populated with students that reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, and consistently support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Stoneham High School provides a variety of leveled academic classes including Advance Placement (AP), honors, intensive, and comprehensive levels, with 39 percent of seniors and 53 percent of juniors taking advantage of AP classes in the 2015-2016 school year. Subject classes are taught by level; however, with the exception of inclusive freshman Honors English, honors social studies classes, intensive and comprehensive level freshmen are mixed heterogeneously in English and social studies. The Endicott survey produced the following results: 71 percent of students surveyed agreeing with the statement, "I have a number of opportunities to take courses in which students of varying levels of ability are enrolled"; and 75 percent of the staff supporting the statement that, "The school requires every student, over the course of the high school experience, to enroll in a minimum of one heterogeneously grouped core course (English/language arts, social studies, math, science)." Electives are not leveled so students can enroll in almost of any elective despite current and previous leveled courses. This provides all students with an opportunity to participate in classes with students who have a variety of learning styles and abilities. Stoneham High School also offers Facing History classes that focus on social issues, their roles and responsibilities in democracy. Stoneham High School follows an inclusion model for students with special needs on an IEP. These students attend regular classes, and are provided with access to challenging academic experiences. In addition, Stoneham High School has a program specifically designed for students who need additional support in gaining independence in daily living skills, as well as preparing for those students to enter the workforce through vocational training called the Reaching Independence through Structured Environments (RISE) program. Some of these students are included in core academic classes with the support of the general education teacher, the special education teacher, as well as an additional support staff when needed. The peer leadership program works very closely with the RISE program, and attend events such as Special Olympics and prom. Because Stoneham High School is equitable, inclusive and fosters heterogeneity throughout its program, it provides students with the opportunity to engage with various types of students while fostering empathy and affords students the opportunity and experience of working with diverse learners both inside and outside of the classroom.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- student shadowing
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Indicator 3

Conclusions

There is a formal, ongoing program or process 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. Stoneham High School has implemented a school-wide advisory program at the start of the 2016-2017 school year. The advisory program connects students to a staff member, as well as to other students generally who participate in the peer leadership program, and offers support, creates rapport, strengthens communication, and builds a strong sense of community within the school. Through this program the school continues to work on a strong community to reduce the feeling of anonymity some students may experience. Advisory groups meet once a month and discuss issues and provide information on topics such as mental health awareness, the school's core values, while providing the students an opportunity to express and explore who they are and who they would like to be in the future. During an interview a student mentioned seeing one of her teachers as rigid and unapproachable, but when this student was part of this teacher's advisory group, she realized that this teacher was really down to earth and changed her perspective of him while in his class. When each student has an adult in the school who knows him or her well, all students will have greater support in achieving the school's 21st century learning standards.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 4

Conclusions

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

The professional staff at Stoneham High School are provided with three optional professional days that they can use as they see fit to collaborate with colleagues. As reported from a recent staff survey, 67 percent of staff members took advantage of one or more professional days with a department member, while 84 percent of staff members reported having participated in professional development outside of the school over the course of the last two years. Some examples of professional development include courses through the SEEM Collaborative and Primary Source, and staff members have attended conferences such as the Massachusetts Computer Using Educators (MassCUE), the Massachusetts Association for Health Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (MAHPERD). Staff are also provided with four early release days per year which is used for mandatory professional development, including training on new technology provided to enhance student learning.

Monthly staff meetings lead by the principal, and monthly department meetings lead by the program supervisors/directors are used to foster conversations about curriculum and instruction, while analyzing data reported from formative assessments as well as MCAS, and AP testing. Professional staff from Stoneham High School participate in a district-wide professional development committee which plans and organizes future professional development based on results of surveys provided to the staff members. For example the special education department will be offering a professional development course on "Successful Integration of Modifications and Accommodations" to help teachers fulfill a requirement needed to renew their license. Professional staff are encouraged to lead professional development courses in their area of expertise to promote leadership.

Despite the efforts of the newly appointed curriculum director, only 33 percent of staff are satisfied with the number of professional development opportunities offered by the district. SHS utilized EventBrite to provide staff with options of professional development offerings, and sign up for ones of interest. Teachers write and execute lesson plans and then analyze the results to measure success and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly. Teachers and administrators also utilize SMART goals to set objectives and measure student achievement. Teachers from all departments have reported using the technology learned in the school's workshops to create websites or pages for their classrooms. According to the Endicott survey, 45 percent of teachers feel that the school's professional development programs enable teachers to acquire and use skills to improve instruction and assessment. Additionally, administrators, program supervisors, and department heads consistently complete additional coursework to stay current and further their license. Although professional staff are provided with multiple opportunities to participate in professional development throughout the course of the year, the school does not have a centralized theme or plan of action for the professional development courses. The professional development seems fragmented. The principal attributes this to various reasons including, but not limited to, last minute changes in agendas.

When administrators commit time that allows for timely and meaningful professional development, teachers will have the opportunity to discuss and reflect on best practices that will improve their teaching.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school board
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 5

Conclusions

School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning. Although school leaders follow the guidelines designated by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, teachers do not feel they get the feedback they need to improve their practice to increase student learning. Teachers are observed two to three times a year and then their evaluation is written. This not necessarily enough time to give teachers ongoing feedback on their instruction to push them to continue to grow and improve. There is little evidence that leadership follows up on the impact of professional development that teachers take part in. The principal confirms that there is not a common theme for observation and evaluation, particularly with implementation of strategies and practices covered in professional development courses. The principal also stated that the themes tend to start on the departmental level and works its way up rather than having a common mandate from the top and trickling down. The current practice limits interdisciplinary collaboration. When the administration employs a teacher evaluation tool that is fair, equitable, and implemented with fidelity, then teachers will have the support to develop high quality instructional practices.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school board
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Indicator 6

Conclusions

The organization of time mostly supports research-based instruction and the learning needs of all students, but is less effective in supporting professional collaboration among teachers. Initially, Stoneham High School ran on a block schedule. This schedule had 8 periods and four 90-minute classes meeting each day, and classes met every other day; this also included a study hall. This schedule did not provide the students with the 990 minutes of instructional time needed to meet state standards. It was reported that the 90-minute blocks were not ideal for all students and all disciplines, and staff were concerned that students were not able to maintain focus and attention for that duration. The principal formed a committee of faculty and teachers to collaborate determine a solution to the problems they were facing. This committee went to other districts to observe various types of schedules before determining a solution to address the current issues with the schedule. This committee determined that a 6x7 block rotation schedule including seven, six-period days with period 7 floating and replacing one period each day. Each class period is 57 minutes in length except for fourth period (lunch block) being 91 minutes in length. This period includes two 30 minute lunch periods with a 15 minute break in between. It was determined that 7 periods were needed to maintain the current course offerings, and teachers are expected to teach five out of the seven periods. Teachers have one full period of prep time on days they teach five classes, and one and a half periods of prep time on days they teach four classes. This model supports the learning needs for all students.

The current 6 x 7 schedule provides few opportunities for interdisciplinary curriculum design or school-wide learning initiatives. The school's curriculum is being aligned and configured to support the core values and beliefs learning, as well as for the implementation of the school-wide 21st century learning expectations rubrics. After the first year of the current schedule, feedback from students and teachers was incorporated to include a flexible instruction time (FIT) period which occurs every third day of school, rotates through each period. The FIT period provides students and staff an opportunity to meet and discuss individual progress, make up missed classwork or tests, and get extra help when needed. In most cases, the schedule supports implementation of effective instructional practices and alternative assessments. Results of a school survey found that 83 percent of teachers feel they have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students, but only 47 percent feel they have enough time to collaborate with colleagues in an informal setting to discuss topics such as student progress, curriculum pacing, and creative lesson planning. This schedule also allows Stoneham High School to share staffing with other schools in the district, to aid in the support of vertical alignment of courses, and support students as they transition from the middle school to the high school.

The current schedule does not fully meet the professional collaboration among teachers. In the upcoming year the principal plans to form a scheduling committee to address the concerns of staff regarding scheduled common planning time within the department as well as between disciplines. The principal would like to work professional learning community (PLCs) each with a different focus into the new schedule. Teachers would be granted the opportunity to lead groups in discussions about their particular topic, and simultaneously form common formative assessments, as well as best practices across multiple disciplines. When Stoneham High School develops a system of professional collaboration that focuses on specific, targeted instructional goals, the instructional practices across all disciplines will enable the students to be participants in an effective and deliberate curricular program that supports high achievement.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 7

Conclusions

In some areas, student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students. According to the results of the Endicott survey 76 percent of the students and 69 percent of the parents feel that class sizes are reasonable, but only 51 percent of the staff agrees. Staff reported that the larger classes do not get as much individual instruction or feedback necessary for student growth, and they need to change the types of formal assessments they use within their classrooms. It was also reported the staff have a more difficult time with classroom management with larger class sizes, and are not able to cover the same amount of content material in larger classes. Some electives such as art and fashion, class size is 28, and teachers have reported to be overloaded with students which can lead to safety issues, and a lack of equipment available for all students. With five classes to teach, many teachers stated that once the overall student load surpasses one hundred, it becomes more difficult to get to know individual students and provide individualized feedback. Students reported they do not feel the instruction of their classes is greatly affected by the class size, and that teachers accommodate and modify the curriculum and environment when necessary. The principal reported that some classes are kept small on purpose in order to provide support for students with higher needs, specifically in the lower level classes. The principal also reported that class conflicts can also cause an imbalance in class sizes. During a meeting with the school committee, the superintendent stated that the class sizes were constructed in a very particular way after receiving a rating of a "level 3 school" from the state. Because of this rating, it was determined that a stronger focus was needed in core academic content classes, and class sizes were adjusted in order to accommodate more instruction, and to provide more feedback to students with higher needs. In order to accommodate the requests of staff, the principal would have to request more money for the budget to hire additional staff, which would be difficult with the decreasing population in the upcoming year, reduce the choices for class offerings to the students, or not allow students to have access to their first or second choice; most importantly, a change in class size would not support students with the highest needs. In order to accommodate student needs, it was necessary to schedule some larger classes. With the introduction of the RISE and STRIDE programs, smaller class sizes are needed to appropriately support those students. For example, math content teachers, in conjunction with special educators were needed to teach two sections of STRIDE classes, which caused larger class sizes for higher level classes with high performing students. Some PE classes have three large classes during a single period in the same facility, which can lead to logistical problems during the winter months. When class sizes at Stoneham High School, reflect the differentiated needs of all students, teachers will be able to meet the learning needs of individual students, while challenging students to meet high achievement expectations.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 5 Indicator 8

Conclusions

The principal, working with other building leaders, collectively provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. According to reports from the School Culture and Leadership Survey, 58 percent of students feel the principal is clear about what she wants the school to accomplish for all students. Also, 58 percent of staff report the principal and other school-based administrators provide instructional leadership that is consistent with the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The principal meets with program supervisors monthly to discuss routine matters, as well as unforeseen issues. Each week's morning announcements, conducted by one of the assistant principals, are themed based on a selected core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, and students are provided with quotes that directly correlate to these values, beliefs, and expectations. Staff members are encouraged to incorporate these quotes into their daily instruction. Staff members are encouraged to provide the principal with suggestions of quotes they use in their classroom or they find important for students learning. Stoneham High School does not have program supervisors for world languages, fine arts, unified arts, and guidance; these departments are informed but not included in this sharing of information and planning, and this responsibility falls on the principal. In addition, the evaluating of all these unrepresented departments falls heavily on the assistant principals and principal, taxing their time and energy; therefore scheduling, budgeting, and curriculum concerns are not sufficiently addressed. The principal relinquishes responsibility of some responsibilities in departments that have program supervisors: English, science, math, social studies. These program supervisors are viewed as administrative staff and are responsible for the evaluation of teachers within their department, running departmental meetings, modifying curriculum, acting as a liaison between their department and the principal or school committee, as well as teaching one class in the 6x7 rotating schedule. The principal also meets monthly with the entire faculty to discuss a wide range of topics. Agenda items at these meetings include, but are not limited to, the introduction of new hires, technology updates, the budget, upcoming events, and the recognition of both academic and athletic achievements. Additionally, agendas from leadership meetings focus on the use of common assessments within departments, and data collection from those assessments that informs individual and departmental instruction. Moreover, the leadership team analyzes data on student achievement of learning expectations, to implemented new program changes when issues arise. The principal and the special education director also meet with administrators from other buildings to see what is happening in other buildings, and to collaborate on how to support students with their transition from the middle school to the high school. Because the administration has developed a leadership model that is inclusive of all stakeholders, members of the school staff will remain focused on their continued improvement and learning goals in all their work.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 5 Indicator 9

Conclusions

Teachers, students, and parents are sometimes involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision making that promote responsibility and ownership. According to the Endicott survey, 43 percent of staff agree that teachers, students, and parents are involved in decision making to promote an atmosphere of responsibility and ownership. In addition, 38 percent of students and 60 percent of parents agree they have input in decision making. Throughout the school year, there are many formal mechanisms in place to provide decision-making opportunities for students, teachers, and parents. For example, the district has recently started a search for a new superintendent. A heterogeneous committee was formed including administrators, school committee members, teachers, parents, and one student, to interview candidates for the upcoming superintendent position, during various stages of the interview process. Parents, students, and staff members have the opportunity to serve on several committees that assist the principal in making decisions that improve teaching and student learning. Some examples of these opportunities include the Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC), School Council, the Booster Club, the Drama Mamas and Papas, the Stoneham Business and Community Educational Foundation, Interact, and the Stoneham Teachers' Association, peer leadership program, and advisory meetings. This information is communicated to students, parents and teachers through email, US Postal Service, Twitter/ Facebook, Google Classroom, Principal newsletters, ConnectEd calls, and special educational liaisons. This information is also provided in the parent's primary language when needed. The principal reported to also having an open door policy where staff, students, and even parents can discuss issues in an informal setting. According to the Endicott survey, 18 percent of faculty surveyed strongly agree that they feel comfortable raising concerns or issues regarding decision-making processes to front office administration, 33 percent of faculty surveyed somewhat agree, 29 percent of faculty surveyed somewhat disagree, and 20 percent of faculty surveyed strongly disagree. The majority of surveyed faculty, 73 percent, have had the opportunity to participate in forums (i.e., meetings, committees) where they can voice their concerns about students, school policies, or other issues in the school community. Faculty have been able to participate in the following meetings: faculty, department, ninth grade advisory board, technology committee, advisory committee, crisis committee, Stoneham Teacher's Association, and NEASC. Information and feedback from these meetings are used in the decision-making process regarding changes within the school community. When group decisions are made, the majority of the faculty support the decisions. When students, teachers, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision making, they become an agent of change to promote responsibility and ownership.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- teacher interview
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school board
- department leaders
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 10

Conclusions

Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning. The teachers volunteer to lead professional development and willingly share their expertise with their peers despite having to miss out on their own learning. In addition, teachers take part in numerous committees such as school council, mentor program, technology committee, hiring committees, and advisories as well as many others. Teachers also serve as chaperones, coaches, club advisors and directors. Teachers and staff members attend school events. The involvement of the faculty providing leadership has created a strong culture of learning, caring, and support at SHS. Because teachers exercise initiative and leadership, they are active participants in the improvement of the school and increase the students' engagement in learning.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teachers
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 11

Conclusions

The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. The school committee and superintendent conduct bi-monthly opened community meetings where all members of the community are invited to attend. At this meeting, various items are placed on the agenda to address any and all business relating to the operation of the schools in the district. In addition to this meeting, the principal meets with the superintendent, along with other district and school leaders, to address various topics including school improvement, school budget, and instruction. At a group discussion where the middle school principal and an elementary principal were present, they reported that it was easy to get in touch with district leadership. The principals feel comfortable advocating for their programs and initiatives and the district leadership listens. Because the school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and instructive, the school receives the support necessary to achieve the 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- school board
- school leadership
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 5 Indicator 12

Conclusions

The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. The principal is given a range of autonomy and decision-making authority to lead the school. She works collaboratively with the school board and superintendent to set the school's budget. The principal first submits the budget to the superintendent who in turns submits it to the school board to approve. In general, the superintendent and school board supports the principal's budget. The same process occurs for any change in major policies or curriculum. The principal reports that she gets a lot of cooperation from the superintendent. She formally meets monthly with the superintendent and other district leaders to discuss new initiatives and to give updates on the progress of the school. Even though the superintendent's office is in the high school, he does not overstep his bounds. There is clear delineation of roles and responsibilities between the three entities and each of them respect the boundaries of their roles. As a result of the school committee and superintendent providing the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school, the principal is able to make decisions that help students achieve the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- school board
- central office personnel
- school leadership
- Endicott survey

Standard 5 Commendations

Commendation

The students who feel they have a safe learning environment that fosters a climate of achievement throughout the school community

Commendation

The implementation of the advisory groups that has contributed to the positive culture of the school and students' feeling of connection to at least one adult in the school

Commendation

The willingness of the staff to engage in various committees such as hiring committees and school council to improve the school and to assist in meeting 21st learning expectations

Commendation

The collaborative working relationship established among the school board, superintendent and principal that is reflective and constructive and works toward achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations

Commendation

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

Commendation

The school that is equitable and inclusive, and ensures access to challenging academic experiences for all students

Commendation

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

Commendation

The positive and constructive relationship between and among students, faculty and administration.

Commendation

The implementation of the peer leadership program

Commendation

The student advisory program that pairs students with mentors throughout their high school career.

Standard 5 Recommendations

Recommendation

Provide meaningful and structured professional development for teachers that supports school-wide initiatives and school-wide academic, civic, and social expectations

Recommendation

Provide regularly used research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning

Recommendation

Develop a system to track the impact of targeted professional development in which staff engages based on a set goal

Recommendation

Create an accountability system to ensure teachers apply the skills, practices, and ideas gain from the professional development to improve instruction and assessment

Standard 6 Indicator 1

Conclusions

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. There are many systems in place to ensure that the needs of students requiring an intervention process are addressed in a timely manner. School administrators, the school psychologist, the school adjustment counselor, and the guidance counselors meet weekly to identify at-risk students and to collaborate regarding how to best address their needs. When a student is identified as at-risk, a student assistance team meeting is scheduled. As a result of this process, at-risk students are sometimes referred to the school psychologist, school adjustment counselor, substance abuse counselor or behavioral health clinician for more individualized follow-up and counseling support. As appropriate, a student may be referred by the student assistance team process to the alternative program, STRIDE (Students Taking Responsibility in Developing Excellence). The SPARTAN Strong Program (Screening, Prevention, Assessment, Referral, Treatment, Acceptance, and Navigation) is in place for students who are impacted in some way by substance use and/or mental health issues. Wellness is promoted through education, counseling, and referrals to school or community-based treatment. The school counseling staff coordinates services available within the school and also outside the school including sexual assault and mental health counseling, non-traditional academic support, and job placement aid for any student who may require intervention. For students receiving special education services, the special education team leader coordinates all referral, annual, and programming meetings. In addition, guidance counselors monitor all students on 504 Accommodation Plans. Students with documented medical plans are provided with similar, although independent, supports through the school nurse. For students in crisis, the school's protocols focus on safety and privacy and provide immediate guidance, support, and action as needed. Although several intervention strategies are in place at Stoneham High School, several teacher interviews indicated that teachers are unaware of the referral process. Because Stoneham High School has coordinated and directive intervention strategies for all students, students are able to achieve the 21st learning expectations in a supportive and safe learning environment.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- teacher interview
- school support staff
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services; however, although there are several methods of ongoing communication with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel that are designed to keep everyone informed about the types of available student support services, they are not always utilized by families. The high school's website includes links to the student handbook, a sports and activities calendar, and library, athletic, and guidance pages. The principal emails parents a newsletter periodically with important, timely school news, including contributions from various staff and departments, as well as information from the central office. An automated phone call is used to inform the school community about important events and emergency situations. Information is also provided to families at various evening parent nights for all grade levels. Families of English language learners have access to translation services, either via phone or in person as needed. The guidance department sends out a weekly email informing parents about upcoming deadlines and parent nights including a Senior Parent Night, Financial Aid Night, a Junior Parent Night, and a College Panel Night. The department also maintains a very comprehensive website, including information about guidance services, standardized testing dates, college, military and career options, financial aid, and access to Naviance. Meetings with guidance staff indicated a willingness to explore other options of communication (Twitter). For families that do not have Internet or computer access, hard copies of the school calendar are distributed to students. Families who do not regularly check email or the school's website may receive critical information via regular mail and phone calls. The special education parent advisory council (SEPAC) meets monthly and coordinates presentations for families provided by outside speakers on various topics. Health services communicates with families via home mailings, emails, phone conversations and inclusion in the principal's weekly newsletter. When the school provides pertinent information to families regarding services that are available, parents will have enhanced opportunities to support their children.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- parents
- central office personnel
- school support staff
- school website

Standard 6 Indicator 3

Conclusions

SHS support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student. PowerSchool is used for the student information system for course selection, scheduling, grading, and other relevant data needed for students and faculty. Students and parents are able to keep updated as to academic progress in their classes by logging into the parent/student portal. Naviance is used for senior students to help them and their families make informed decisions regarding post-high school decisions. To complement Naviance, the guidance department uses the Massachusetts Career Information System for career exploration. ESPED is used to write and monitor IEPs and 504 Plans. The health office utilizes the SNAP Health Center computerized program to document student visits, assessments, medications, treatments and case management coordination. The technology infrastructure has been updated recently and runs efficiently. The media center uses Follett Destiny as its online library catalog as well as for management of the book collection and maintains subscriptions to several online academic databases for student research needs. The media center specialist instructs classes on proper use of the academic databases. Technology hardware in the form of Chromebook carts and computer labs are adequate to meet the needs of students receiving services from support staff. Because support services staff utilizes a variety of technology in their programs, their services are easily accessed by all students and staff.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- students
- school support staff

Standard 6 Indicator 4

Conclusions

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

Stoneham High School has developed a written developmental guidance curriculum, with varying lessons by grade level. However several student interviews indicate that while some of the intended topics are covered in a variety of both formal and informal methods, the actual delivery of the curriculum is not consistent with what is written. Significant emphasis addresses the transition from grade 8 to grade 9. Guidance counselors meet initially with grade 8 students as they prepare course selection for grade 9. Guidance counselors meet with freshmen both individually and in groups during their freshman year. The focus at the sophomore level is understanding transcripts and GPA, as well as career exploration activities. For junior and senior students the focus moves to post-secondary planning.

Although guidance counselors utilize pre- and post-test assessments to determine the effectiveness of the guidance curriculum and make adjustments as needed, there is currently no formal assessment for measuring the effectiveness of guidance services. There are 4 full-time guidance counselors at the high school level, with a guidance counselor-to-student ratio of 1:170. There is a part-time (.4) school adjustment counselor to provide additional support services. The next academic year the adjustment counselor will increase time to .7 FTE. Recently a school resource officer has been added to the team. The SRO is currently housed at the middle school and has responded to needed interventions at the high school.

Referrals to community resources such as counseling agencies are made as necessary by the student support staff. Recently the NAN project has been introduced, which trains staff and students on a peer-to-peer model. The guidance office currently has a guidance intern who is conducting groups for college bound seniors and assisting them in navigating the decision and transition process. Recently, the school principal and the local Chamber of Commerce facilitated a career fair. The student support staff meet weekly as a student support team to discuss students who have academic and social/emotional issues. This team develops interventions as appropriate to assist in the students' success. The team also serves as a pre-referral team for special education evaluations. There are programs in place to meet the needs of all students. The SPARTAN Strong Program provides support for students experiencing social/emotional issues, such as anxiety or depression and substance abuse concerns. The school adjustment counselor and psychologist provide services to this group of students. The STRIDE program is geared toward at-risk students who have challenges engaging in their education. An extensive referral process is in place for referral of students to the STRIDE program. Although referral information is provided to faculty in their mailboxes, most faculty reported that they are not aware of the referral process. The guidance office offers a peer tutoring program. Counselors recruit students to participate as tutors at the beginning of the year, based on competency in a subject and available time. When students request tutoring, a match is then made. A notebook is maintained in guidance to facilitate this program.

According to the Endicott survey, 68 percent of the students report that they feel comfortable going to guidance. This was also supported in student interviews. However, only 25 percent of students agree with the statement that they meet with their school counselor regularly. Again this was echoed in student interviews. Students feel comfortable if they need to initiate contact with their counselor but some students expressed they would like to have more guidance initiated contact. Students also indicated that when in need of counseling, or if they have a concern about a fellow classmate, they would feel more comfortable going to a classroom teacher or the nurse. Currently, scheduling of courses is completed primarily by students and teachers. After an explanatory class presentation by the guidance department including a PowerPoint explaining the selection process and grading requirements, students complete a Program Selection Form which their teachers must sign to approve their choices. After then obtaining their guidance counselors signatures for approval, students must log into PowerSchool to enter the courses themselves. Student interviews indicated that many students do not feel

prepared for this process and would have liked more personal guidance in their choices. When parents responded to the statement regarding the adequacy of the number of counseling staff, 17 percent were unsure and 21 percent answered "do not know." Forty-eight percent agrees that the counseling staff is adequate. However, during a parent meeting, parents responded that the number of counselors providing sufficient guidance services to their students is adequate.

The guidance office is spacious and open. There are four computers for students to review college and career exploration. College banners are displayed in the guidance suite along with the various colleges to which seniors have been accepted. Four individual guidance offices and the school adjustment counselor office are off the main room. Many guidance resources are displayed in the guidance suite. A guidance secretary schedules appointments for students with their respective guidance counselor.

When the guidance department provides many opportunities including a written developmental program, one to one interpersonal interaction, and collection/analysis of feedback from multiple sources that allow it to improve upon its delivery of services, students will be supported in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- students
- parents
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website

Standard 6 Indicator 5

Conclusions

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

The health service personnel includes one full-time nurse, a physical therapist, occupational therapist, and speech therapist. On a typical day, an average of 35-45 students visit the health office for a range of services including treatment of common ailments such as colds, headaches, and stomachaches, treatment of injury-related issues, and dispensing of daily and as-needed medications. The nurse also monitors students with chronic conditions such as diabetes, asthma, seizure disorders, and life threatening allergies. Appropriate referrals are made to guidance counselors, the school psychologist, substance abuse counselor and the school adjustment counselor as needed. In addition, the school nurse monitors student immunizations and physical examination compliance. Preventative care includes BMI, vision and hearing screenings for grade 10 students and postural screening for grade 9 students; referrals are made to appropriate physicians as needed.

The school nurse teaches students regarding specific issues such as nutrition, allergies, chronic conditions as well as illness and injury prevention. Ongoing care includes participation in 504 meetings, IEP meetings, and other accommodation planning as needed. The school nurse has ongoing communication with parents and school staff regarding student health care issues. This communication may be via a school-wide newsletter, telephone call, or letter to a parent regarding student-specific issues. All health office visits, student health conditions and medications, immunizations, screening, and health care plans are documented in the SNAP computerized program. The nurse collects data on length of visit time in the health office and return to class rate on an ongoing basis. The nurse reviews results, monitors for trends, and makes adjustments to practice so that students can achieve the 21st century learning expectations. For example, the nurse surveys students with chronic healthcare issues in the fall and spring to determine their understanding of their health care condition and treatments. Student length of visit time in the nurse's office is monitored monthly with the goal of the visit being fewer than ten minutes. The shorter length of visit time in the nurse's office results in increased time in the classroom so that students can achieve learning expectations. The nurse also coordinates CPR, EpiPen, and Narcan training for school staff. The school has installed four AEDs strategically throughout the school. Additionally, the nurse administers yearly flu shots for all staff members who wish to receive it. The nurse serves on the crisis team and wellness committee. According to the Endicott survey, 81 percent of students report that they feel comfortable going to the school nurse, and 72 percent of staff state that the school has sufficient certified/licensed health service personnel. In addition, 69 percent of staff agree that the health services personnel provide preventative health and direct intervention services. According to the Endicott survey, 62 percent of parents state that the school's health service program has an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff. In addition, 61 percent of parents agree that health services personnel provide preventative health and direct intervention services.

Because Stoneham High School employs an adequate number of qualified health professionals, students receive appropriate and ongoing preventative health and direct intervention services to improve their overall learning, attendance, and achievement of goals.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 6 Indicator 6

Conclusions

The Stoneham High School library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed library/media services personnel and support staff who are extensively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum; provide an extensively wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum; ensure that the facility is adequately available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school; are consistently responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning; and always 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.

The media center is adequately staffed with one full-time certified school librarian and one part-time library paraprofessional, as well as one full-time media technician. According to the Endicott survey, 60 percent of the school staff and 56 percent of the parents believe this is sufficient. The library/media personnel are actively engaged in the school's curriculum. Instructional collaborations are currently in place with science, social studies, English and art. Teacher interviews reflect that the library media specialist initiates conversations with faculty about opportunities for collaboration and utilization of the media center and its resources. The library media specialist also explores possible connections to the curriculum by participating in department meetings and emailing teachers with new ideas and available resources. Classes regularly visit the library to receive instruction from the librarian and to do class research. The library media specialist takes an active role as a co-teacher to work with the students, helping them locate and access materials as well as complete the day's task. All freshmen participate in a formal library orientation as part of their English class. This program introduces students to the library/media personnel as a research support and provides an opportunity for students to learn library procedures, to locate materials, and to access library resources in school and from home. Typically, freshmen are taught Destiny (the online catalog), the Historic *New York Times* database, the Gale databases and use of bibliographic tools. When students begin National History Day (NHD) during their sophomore year, the NHD resources and other databases are introduced. In addition, when appropriate for the assignment, students are instructed in how to apply for and use a Boston Public Library (BPL) e-card and the free student subscription to *The Boston Globe*. For upperclassmen, depending on the assignment, resources are introduced or reinforced.

The success of the library is reflected in that 81 percent of the students report in the Endicott survey that the library staff is willing to help them find information. According to the Endicott survey, 75 percent of the students, 86 percent of the staff, and 52 percent of the parents believe the library provides a wide range of materials and technology. Current inventory includes approximately 10,000 materials including print volumes, DVDs and CDs (Audiobooks). Books are available in a variety of reading levels, including high-interest, low-reading level titles which are particularly popular with the growing ELL population. Audiobooks for all required and some pleasure reading are available. DVDs are purchased to support the curriculum for teachers to use in class and for absent students to borrow. Students also have access to the NOBLE network (which includes Stoneham Public Library) and the Boston Public Library. The library media specialist works closely with the Stoneham Public Library to make additional resources available to students during larger projects like National History Day, and sends school library copies of all the summer reading books to the public library for student access during the summer. Teachers request library materials on the annual teacher request form sent via email every April/May which guides library purchases for the following year. Of particular concern are any new curriculum initiatives. The media center maintains a comprehensive website which includes access to all resources including Destiny, electronic bibliographic tools, online academic databases (both state-funded and school-funded), National History Day resources, the NOBLE network and the Boston Public Library. Students are taught to use the library's website as the information gateway for their research needs supporting their independent learning during school hours or at home. For transitional and self-contained special education classes, specialized databases such as Kid Infobits and Research in Context are accessed for research. Advanced Placement and honor classes are taught how to use JSTOR, a college-level journal database.

At present, the library also serves as a workspace for several students taking online courses through Edgenuity.

For group instruction, the library media specialist utilizes an LCD projector, a mobile flat screen TV, and a newly acquired widescreen web cam, allowing the possibility of Skype-based field trips. The school will soon be acquiring three 3D printers, one of which will be located in the media center. There are also two Chromebook carts containing 70 Chromebooks and 18 desktop computers with an additional 38 computers in a nearby computer lab. WiFi is available. Both areas have flexible schedules, making it easy for teachers to reserve, and the media technician is available as tech support. School-wide initiatives requiring the use of a computer usually take place in the computer lab, such as Impact (Concussion) Training. Library management, including overdue materials and inventory, is handled via Destiny. Recent re-organization of the media center space has greatly increased the use of the media center as well as the services it can offer to the school community, now allowing up to three classes to work separately in the space along with students working individually.

The media center personnel has made strides meeting the interests and needs of all students, both academically in the instruction of research skills and information acquisition but also socially/emotionally by creating a space where all students feel comfortable and safe, encouraging interaction and sharing of ideas and knowledge among students. The library and computer lab are open from 7:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. The librarian and media technician voluntarily open the library and computer lab as soon as they arrive in the morning (often 7:00 a.m.), which is greatly appreciated by students. During the school day, students use the library or computer lab with their classes. Students may also access the library or computer lab during a FIT period with a pass from the sending teacher. In the computer lab, teachers supervise their classes with the media technician available for tech support. For National History Day, the library media specialist works closely with the social studies department. In preparation for their projects, students learn to use appropriate technology and tools to access, evaluate, and effectively apply information as consistent with the school's 21st century learning expectations. During the actual NHD event, the library media specialist reads most of the annotated bibliographies and acts as a judge. In addition, all the NHD exhibits and websites are housed in the library. Through observation and feedback from the NHD process papers (Questions 1 and 3), she is able to assess any common mistakes or deficiencies and collaborate with the social studies program supervisor to enhance the NHD instructional component for the following year. The library media specialist annually assesses how well teachers' needs are being met through a faculty survey sent to teachers annually. Informal assessment is also conducted through feedback received from frequent check-in conversations with both faculty and students.

Because the library/media personnel are extensively engaged in the school's curriculum, provide an extensively wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services, maintain a space that is conducive to learning and is well-staffed, respond to students' interests and needs, and conduct ongoing assessment of the library/media program, students become lifelong learners and can achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teachers
- students
- school support staff
- Endicott survey
- school website
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 6 Indicator 7

Conclusions

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

The principal is the 504 coordinator, with the respective guidance counselor coordinating the implementation of the 504 Plan. Each student who has a 504 Plan has an update meeting upon entering grade 9. Each year a review is conducted by the 504 team of the student's 504 Plan. The guidance counselor is responsible for providing 504 Plan information to the classroom teachers at the beginning of the academic year and at midyear. It was reported that teachers are in compliance with 504 plans and IEPs however, most caseloads are very low. When questions arise, faculty contact the respective individual responsible for clarification. Stoneham High School recently added the position of transition specialist to the special education team. This person works with students, parents and staff to assist students in their post-high school plans. A variety of services are provided such as career interest inventories, parent interviews, job skills, and independent living skills. Professional development is being developed to assist special education staff understand the role of the transition specialist. The special education department has seven paraprofessionals who work with students in the special education programs such as the RISE program and STRIDE program. In addition, they work with the job coach and faculty in the classrooms. Special education faculty co-teach with regular education teachers in specific classes in accordance with a student's IEP.

A parent advisory group (SEPAC) exists for parent input into special education services. The program supervisor attends these meetings and takes into account recommendations from the members. Utilizing data has been a focus for Stoneham High School special education this year. Professional development activities focusing on data collection and utilizing rubrics to provide concrete information to parents have been conducted. In addition, faculty coaching has occurred every other month to support the professional development in service. Stoneham High School employs an ELL teacher and there is a district-wide ELL coordinator. At present, the school reports the ELL population to be low, with expectation to increase in the upcoming years. The ELL teacher works with teachers and provides suggestions for teaching strategies. Translation services are available for IEP meetings and parent meetings through a contracted service.

Because Stoneham High School has adequate support services and staff for students requiring accommodations, modifications and ELL services, students experience an inclusive learning environment helping them to meet the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- panel presentation
- teachers
- school support staff
- Endicott survey

Standard 6 Commendations

Commendation

The STRIDE Program (Students Taking Responsibility in Developing Excellence) and the SPARTAN Strong Program (Screening, Prevention, Assessment, Referral, Treatment, Acceptance, Navigation)

Commendation

The variety of communication methods used by support services to communicate with families

Commendation

The effective use of current technology to deliver student support services

Commendation

The overall health services program that provides personalized care to all students

Commendation

The newly created position of transition specialist to assist special education students in post-secondary transition

Commendation

The comprehensive guidance department website

Commendation

The development of the peer leadership program that encourages students to take ownership of their school community

Commendation

The wide range of resources in the media center to meet the need's of variety of learners and abilities

Commendation

The transition programs from grade 8 to grade 9 and from high school to post-graduate plans

Commendation

The reorganization of the media center space to maximize its potential

Standard 6 Recommendations

Recommendation

Increase the level of personal counseling by establishing a more proactive vs reactive relationship between guidance counselors and the students on their caseload

Recommendation

Revisit and update the written guidance curriculum to properly reflect what is taught to each grade and its method of delivery

Recommendation

Conduct a needs assessment as to student interpretation of guidance services

Recommendation

Increase outreach and visibility about guidance services to the student body

Recommendation

Ensure that all teachers are familiar with the process for identifying and referring students in need of special education and other intervention services

Recommendation

Increase the level of one-on-one personal counseling by guidance counselors in the course selection process

Standard 7 Indicator 1

Conclusions

The community and the district's governing body provide 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; and sufficient instructional materials and supplies.

Stoneham High School offers a wide range of school programs and services, including culinary classes, film editing classes, photography, three world languages, and multiple AP classes. Students interviewed report satisfaction with the variety of course offerings. According to the self-study, while classes like auto technology have been eliminated, world languages offerings have increased. There has also been a recent addition of English electives. Services offered have expanded to include a .4 FTE adjustment counselor (soon to be .7 FTE) and a district-wide substance abuse counselor. Staff size appears to be sufficient; data provided by the school shows that average class size for the current school year is 14.36. However, students report the class size ranges from as small as 8 to as large as 30. Data provided by the school show classes as large as 36 in a small number of cases. Only 28 percent of students in the Endicott survey feel that the school needs more teachers. The self-study and conversations with teachers showed that the faculty does have a concern about class sizes in some areas, such as electives and math. However students do not feel that the class sizes have an adverse impact on their learning.

Professional development opportunities are offered, and curriculum revision is an ongoing process. The district has purchased a program called Rubicon Atlas to facilitate this curriculum writing. One teacher interviewed noted that this program allowed her to work on her curriculum over the summer and to easily share her lessons and ideas with other teachers. Teachers report a lack of dedicated PLC time to collaborate on this. The superintendent reports that money is available for curriculum writing time in the summer. The superintendent agrees that more teachers have taken advantage of the summer stipends for the development of curricula after discussions with the union over compensation. Both teachers and central office explain that there is an "open invitation" to teachers to take advantage of three professional days per year for conferences, research, curricular planning, or other professional development. However, many teachers express a reluctance to be away from their classrooms. Technology support is offered. In interviews with administration, "Tech Tuesdays," a drop in technology support for teachers is available after school. For example, teachers have stepped forward to lead training on Google Classroom. Some staff interviewed expressed concern that they have received little training on newer software like PowerSchool and the use of SMARTBoards. The director of technology explains that the district is still looking into add-ons for the program, such as a special education portal for teachers to access information about their students confidentially, and training will be both forthcoming and ongoing as the district acquires more software.

Interviews with students, teachers and the technology department reveal that the technology department is responsive when immediate help affecting instruction is needed. Students report that the equipment in their classes sufficient. Students do not feel that they are missing out on learning opportunities due to a lack of equipment. Students report that the amount of technology (devices) is sufficient to meet their needs. The ratio of devices to students is 1.5 to 1. A school tour revealed two labs with enough computers to accommodate a full class. Departments have dedicated equipment to suit their needs, such as three Chromebook carts for the English department and an iPad cart for science. While the number and type of devices do vary by department, meetings with the technology department reveal that there are actually four labs in the building that are available for teachers to sign out, as well as Chromebooks available in the library. With the introduction of more Chromebooks in the building, teachers are utilizing the labs less and less. While students report they have sufficient materials and supplies, only 37 percent of staff surveyed agree that the district provides dependable funding for instructional materials, supplies, and equipment. However, in many conversations with individual teachers, when pressed, teachers stated that, while there are many things they would like to have, their basic needs are met. The self-study states that program supervisors and department heads purchase instructional materials to meet students' needs. This seems to be the case in the majority of classes. However, in the self-study and conversations with teachers, classes such as art and family and consumer science can lack in supplies.

Because the district and community offers support for programs, staff, technology, and equipment, students receive a wide range of educational experiences enhancing their personal development and promoting a personal connection to the school and community.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- facility tour
- teachers
- students
- department leaders
- school support staff

Standard 7 Indicator 2

Conclusions

The school struggles to develop, plan, and fund programs to ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant. The almost fifty-year-old building is in need of constant repair. There are drastic inconsistencies in the temperature between rooms, windows that cannot be properly opened or closed, and broken blinds. The visiting committee encountered closed bathrooms and saw damaged ceiling tiles as well. However, in spite of concerns by faculty and staff, students interviewed did not believe that the state of the building impacted their learning. The focus has been on fixing immediate problems as they arise. Repairs are completed with the aim to avoid extremes such as uncomfortably hot and cold rooms as the older equipment breaks. For example, two new, low water temperature boilers were installed in 2016 after original boilers failed in 2015. Additionally, two new pumps for the boilers, variable speed drives, and a new air compressor were also added out of necessity. In the same year, a plumber was hired to address the problems in faculty and student bathrooms, classrooms, and locker rooms. Many water fountains were also not working properly, so new water fountains with filters were installed on the first and second floors, according to the self-study. There is, however, no proper schedule for preventative maintenance. For example, teachers report they have been told the custodial staff will call a plumber "when five things break down." Because many of the fixtures (i.e., toilets and sinks) are older, finding and ordering replacement parts further delay the response time for repair. However, entering the 2017-2018 school year, the facilities director has been able to hire a dedicated HVAC specialist. Hiring this specialist frees up more money for preventative maintenance such as belt replacement and oiling bearings. While responsive repairs are made as needed, there are no formal plans in place to address larger issues. The school community stressed many concerns over the building condition, especially prioritizing a new roof over older sections of building and a kitchen renovation; however, a list of building renovation priorities has not been formalized as the school is looking for a new building vs, investment in updates and costly renovations. With the hope that funding will soon come through for a new school, a feasibility study will likely be completed over the summer in order to assess the cost of constructing a new high school.

In spite of the age of the building, the school has developed, planned, and funded programs to keep the school clean on a daily basis. There is a written plan for what custodians do on a daily basis, and the maintenance department does have a Custodial Care Program to address the building cleanliness. This "how-to" program details specific tasks and the required cleaning agents. Certificates of inspection are up-to-date and cataloged in the office of the director. The classrooms, bathrooms, and public areas appear clean and brightly lit, and the furniture is in fair condition. While Stoneham High School has managed to develop, plan, and fund programs to address problems as they arise, replace broken equipment, and keep the school clean on a daily basis, the needed plans and funding for preventative maintenance has been neglected. When the Stoneham High School community and stakeholders develop, plan, and fund programs to ensure maintenance and repair of the building and school plant; properly maintain and replace equipment while keeping the school clean on a daily basis, students will have access to high quality programs in a safe learning environment.

Sources of Evidence

- classroom observations
- self-study
- student shadowing
- facility tour
- teacher interview
- teachers
- central office personnel
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 3

Conclusions

Currently the community funds programs and services, enrollment changes and staffing needs, and technology. However, no formal plan exists to address facility needs and capital improvements. Currently, the school offers a range of classes, including a variety of AP classes and electives including culinary, art, film editing, and photography. Offerings for student services have been expanded in the special education department to include services in the STRIDE and RISE programs. This includes a full-time transition specialist, paraprofessional acting as job coach, and a teacher in the STRIDE program. An ELL teacher has recently been added due to a growing non-English speaking population. Guidance services have been expanded to include a full-time, district-wide substance abuse counselor, a .4 FTE adjustment counselor (to be .7 FTE next year), and a .6 FTE therapeutic coordinator. Current staffing levels are mostly sufficient to address the needs of students. Support service staff (including guidance, nurse, adjustment counselor, substance abuse counselor), feel that they have enough staff to provide their services. Based on data provided by the school, average class size is 14.36. This data also shows that classes can be as large as 36 in some instances. Teachers, in interviews as well as in the self-study, expressed a concern regarding larger class sizes in art, family and consumer science, business, and economic classes due to an influx of families moving in to town. The self-study report expressed teacher concern about this as a potential safety issue. Enrollment is expected to increase slightly over the next two years.

Teachers also expressed concern regarding the lack of program supervisors in all departments. Departments such as art/music, guidance, and world languages have department heads, who have limited responsibilities. Teachers have also expressed concern regarding the number of paraprofessionals; teachers stated that, due to limited staffing in this area, students who may need assistance get sent to classes such as art without this assistance.

Currently, the school-wide technology supports that are in place are adequate for the delivery of instruction. Multiple students expressed that they have sufficient access to technology. In the Endicott survey, 65 percent of student agree/strongly agree that there are a sufficient number of computers for student use. Given the multiple Chromebook carts as well as computers available in labs and the library, students can have access to a device when they need it. Students also expressed that WiFi access is sufficient to meet their needs. A technology director was recently hired. A technology plan has become a regular part of the school budget with funds allocated for infrastructure, hardware/software, repair, and support.

Teachers have expressed significant concerns with the condition of the building. The self-study indicates that improvements have been delayed. Teachers expressed that repairs to windows are often not completed. In the Endicott survey, 13.7 percent of staff agree that the school has a long-range plan to address facilities, future programs, services, staffing levels, and capital improvements. Broken blinds and fallen ceiling tiles are often not replaced. The director of facilities stated that the most urgent issues, such as heat in the winter, are addressed immediately. Often, repairs to items like the boiler or plumbing can be delayed because parts for older equipment can be difficult to track down. The director of facilities indicated that the current budget was not sufficient to complete urgent repairs. The director of facilities also shared that there will be an on-staff HVAC technician starting in the 2017-2018 school year. This will help re-allocate funds towards repairs. The director of facilities started in this position within the last year, and he shared that, in the past, the school had a more "reactive repair culture"; his goal, over time, is to move toward a more proactive approach. When the community funds and the school addresses all areas of concern in a formal plan including staffing needs, building infrastructure maintenance and upkeep, and technology, students will receive a safe and efficient environment, capable of promoting equity while enhancing their abilities to reach the school's 21st century learning expectations.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- school leadership
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 4

Conclusions

Building administrators and program supervisors are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget. Faculty input is limited to the initial stage of the budgeting process. As described in the self-study, the superintendent meets with directors, school principals, and program supervisors to create the upcoming year's budget proposal. Directors and supervisors take requests from teachers, but, based on teacher interviews, this is the extent of teacher input. This is supported by the Endicott survey, where 72.6 percent of staff disagree/strongly disagree with the statement, "I have input into the development of the school budget." Teachers report that, in general, their requests for supplies and equipment are met. A program supervisor confirmed that they are able to meet teachers needs within the budget. When all stakeholders feel they have equitable input into the budget, well-informed decisions can be made to support all areas of the school's needs.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teachers
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 5

Conclusions

In many cases, the school site, although limited by structural deficiencies, does support the delivery of high quality school programs as the faculty has adapted to these adverse conditions. The commitment of the teachers and staff to the education and welfare of the students eclipses the shortcomings of the facilities. Students do not believe that instruction is impacted by the state of the school due to the commitment of the teachers to supplant classroom structural deficiencies. They report liking the size of the classrooms and that the building is clean and space well-utilized. One English class has large windows, a SMARTBoard, and an inviting arrangement of furniture. However, this is not consistent throughout the building. Some classrooms had noticeable degradation to structural elements, for ex. rotted window casings, missing and loose ceiling tiles, missing floor tiles, and aged walls and bathroom facilities. The Endicott survey, reveal that 60 percent of students and 42 percent of parents believe the school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services. The building itself is large and is currently used to capacity. Some rooms, such as the old industrial shop classrooms, are unused. There is a large faculty lounge containing a refrigerator, microwaves, and vending machines, allowing teachers to interact during the day. There are also smaller rooms scattered throughout the building that accommodate five to eight people and are used informally by staff. Although classrooms are furnished with mismatched furniture donated or gifted from renovated district schools, they are adequate for supporting the delivery of instruction. Fifty-three classrooms have been outfitted with white boards, and 37 are interactive. Most classrooms are cheerfully decorated, clean, and spacious. Teachers have worked very hard to make the learning environment as inviting as possible given the current deficiencies in each classroom. Some of the most pressing concerns are in the process of being addressed. Currently, a first floor bathroom, the elevator, and the double doors throughout the school are being renovated for ADA compliance. Teachers and other staff, however, see more room for improvements, and on the Endicott survey, only 6 percent of the staff agree that the physical plant supports the needs of the programs and services. The self-study noted that the chemistry classrooms are in a state of disrepair and that the physics classroom setup is not conducive to the course's demands. In an interview, a science teacher explained that students in biology classes sometimes must do their classwork at the tables on which others have just completed dissections with little time to disinfect the table. The self-study did indicate that there is an option to renovate the vacant industrial shop classes to include updated science labs and that this has been added to the capital plan. Teachers voiced concerns about the other classrooms as well. The location of the electrical outlets in one classroom forced the teacher to arrange her desk, computer, and phone in front of her SMARTBoard. As a result, the teacher saw this clustering as a less student-centered environment. In many rooms, the broken blinds impair the use projectors for instruction. It was observed that one teacher, in response to this concern, hung butcher paper over his windows to block out the glare. This make-shift solution is temporary and unsightly. The varying temperature of the rooms was also a concern for the teachers who spent most of the day in their rooms. A teacher relayed that a colleague has had to wear a coat and gloves to deliver instruction in her classroom, and other teachers report lost instructional time when students ask to return to their lockers for hats and coats. Moreover, the outdated cafeteria does not encourage students to buy breakfast and lunch. Cafeteria staff pointed out deterrents to student participation, such as the long, single line in which students must queue for food, the row of utilitarian steam trays, and lack of equipment to make more interesting items like stir fries, for example. The cafeteria is clean, large, and well-lit, but at least one oven was noticeably out of service. When the school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services, student learning and participation in programming are supported.

Sources of Evidence

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

Standard 7 Indicator 6

Conclusions

The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are mostly in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations. Documentation provided by the school shows recent inspections for the elevator as well as kitchen exhaust, duct-work, filters, hood inspection. The building is minimally accessible for students with handicaps. The director of facilities described a plan in place for June 2017 to improve handicap access by changing the grade on the sidewalk to make it accessible to wheelchairs, installing handicap buttons on front door, upgrading the elevator (new switches and emergency phone), hallway doors being powered open, fire alarm strobe lights in bathroom (for the hearing impaired), and a bathroom to be converted to a dedicated handicap bathroom by creating more space (remove one stall) and installing grab bars. There is only one elevator. The self study report indicated that in the summer of 2016, a water test revealed a slight amount of lead. As a result, plumbing fixtures were replaced. According to the self-study report and teacher interviews, financial constraints exist and the maintenance schedule is more reactive than proactive. Teachers have expressed concern about air quality; there has not been a recent air quality test. When the school provides a social and academic environment that is safe, in compliance with regulations, and fully accessible to students with handicaps, all students will have a safe learning environment in which to realize their full potential.

Sources of Evidence

- teachers
- central office personnel
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Indicator 7

Conclusions

All professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school. The school website is a hub for information and includes an electronic copy of the student handbook, a comprehensive list of course offerings, MCAS information, the school calendars, activities, and contacts for teachers. Teachers and supervisors report that teachers use communication venues such as the telephone and emails to contact parents individually. In response to the growing community of English language learners, the school has employed translation services for communiques including the school's electronic report card. Interpreters attend parent-teacher meetings and IEP meetings as needed. This year, Stoneham High School has adopted PowerSchool as its official means for communicating grade and attendance information to families. Teachers are required to record attendance before the end of the first period. When teachers input scores and comments for various assignments, parents can see this information as well. While some teachers update their grades electronically on a regular basis, others do so less frequently. Although there is currently no school board policy for how often teachers must input grades, the Faculty Handbook clearly articulates the expectation that grades are done on a weekly basis. PowerSchool is also the vehicle through which the electronic report cards are generated.

Moreover, Stoneham High School actively engages families through a variety of programming and presentations. For example, the Internet safety advisory committee recently organized a two-night presentation on Internet safety. One night was a panel presentation; second night was a follow-up discussion. Most school-wide communications are handled by principals at the various schools, not by the central administration, in order to foster more of a sense of a school community and to tailor news to the audience. For example, the principal's weekly blog and announcements by Connect Ed have been used to this end. Additionally, Stoneham High School has gained a social media presence with creation of Twitter and Facebook accounts for the school. The SHS library uses Twitter; the guidance department is currently looking into creating a Twitter account as well. Parent involvement is significant and critical to the community overall, and teachers mostly expressed satisfaction with parent turn out on back-to-school and parent-teacher conference nights. Teachers also reiterated that they call home and email when they want to speak with parents/guardians. There are many contributing parent support groups: Stoneham School Council, Stoneham Music Parents, Stoneham Booster Club, Stoneham Gridiron Club, and the Library Volunteers. Groups fund raise for equipment and supplies, such as an athletic golf cart and new music equipment. The Stoneham Special Education Parent Advisory Council provides educational information to parents and the broader community on special education issues and services.

The guidance department website is another resource for parents to stay informed and up-to-date on student progress throughout and beyond their high school experience with a variety of important links to upcoming events and college/career information. Additionally, the counselors serve as liaisons between families and school staff. Counselors host and sponsor a number of events: junior and senior future planning events, a PSAT night, a college panel, a financial aid seminar, and a grade 8 parent night. They also welcome individual parent meetings before, during, and after school. In addition, Naviance, an online tool, is available to help students and parents with the college process. The department regularly sends information about deadlines, parent nights, future/college planning, and PSAT preparation to the principal for inclusion in the weekly blog. The guidance department further reaches out to the students of families who are less involved in the post-high school planning process by offering small groups in which students are helped through filling out forms and navigating the application and/or job search process. Because teachers and staff fully commit to school-home communication, students benefit from the partnership between the school and guardians.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- students
- central office personnel
- school support staff

Standard 7 Indicator 8

Conclusions

Stoneham High School develops productive parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships that support student learning. There are many contributing parent support groups: Stoneham School Council, Stoneham Music Parents, Stoneham Booster Club, Stoneham Gridiron Club, and the library volunteers. Parent groups fundraise for equipment and supplies such as an athletic golf cart and new music equipment. The Stoneham Special Education Parent Advisory Council provides educational information to parents and the broader community on special education issues and services. The council's work supports respect for and attainment of an appropriate education for all children with special needs. It also ensures those students' needs are met under Chapter 766 and other applicable laws. Local partnerships within the community and businesses include one with the Stoneham Chamber of Commerce for Career Day, where local business leaders speak about their educational background and a typical day in their professions. Additionally, students can participate in the Stoneham Fire Department Explorer Program. The school also holds partnerships with a individual businesses in the community. For example, the Stoneham Ford and Ford Motor Corporation have offered a fundraiser called Drive For Your School. During world languages week's cultural celebration, several local restaurants donate food. The Stoneham Business Community Educational Foundation Grant Program and the Cummings Boston One Grant Program provide grants to teachers for projects including the school garden, the May Arts Festival, and special education improvements.

To foster community engagement further, Stoneham High School offers a Peer Leadership class. Juniors and seniors who apply and are accepted into peer leaders are trained by the Anti-Defamation League's "World of Difference" peer trainers to design and lead interactive workshops for their peers and other students. A peer leader's role is to create and run anti-bias educational workshops for peers and to be role models for civility and respect. Students must be willing to stand against prejudice and to create a positive social atmosphere. Students in the Peer Leadership class showed enthusiasm and genuine interest in fostering a strong school-community connection. Additionally, creative writing students meet with Stoneham seniors to interview them about their lives; these interviews are published in the local paper. Community opportunities through grants and funding give students the opportunity to join different clubs including the local Rotary Club, which sponsors the community-service club, Interact.

Other school opportunities to work within the greater community include the RISE and Peer Leader Partnership that matches special education and general education students to form friendships and to model life skills; student world languages and French clubs that broaden students' cultural experiences; and the art and drama clubs opportunities for students that publicly display their art and performances. Art work from all grade levels is included in the Stoneham Public Library Art Show and is often displayed on Stoneham Local TV channel and the district's website as well. Juniors and seniors interested in careers in nursing have internship opportunities through Melrose-Wakefield Hospital in both fall and spring semesters. Individually, guidance counselors have secured internships and job shadowing for careers such as physical therapy and mechanical engineering as well. Students in the RISE program participate in volunteering at the Melrose-Wakefield Hospital and also receive job training and a variety of experiences in the community to prepare them for life after high school. Harvard University also offers the science department a partnership where students are able to participate in lab demonstrations. Additionally, community colleges offer a dual enrollment program for students. Because Stoneham High School offers numerous opportunities for parent, community, business, and higher education partnerships, students are able to meet 21st century learning expectations and receive an enhanced, authentic educational experience.

Sources of Evidence

- self-study
- teacher interview
- teachers
- Endicott survey
- Standard sub-committee

Standard 7 Commendations

Commendation

The commitment by the faculty and staff to maintain a high level of quality instruction in spite of the adverse building conditions

Commendation

The sufficient funding available to meet teachers' classroom needs for supplies and technology

Commendation

The ability for parents and guardians to access information about their students' educational progress through an online portal

Commendation

The outreach to and formation of relationships within the wider town community

Commendation

The district administration's efforts in creating, maintaining, and expanding essential services such as staffing, technology, and programming

Commendation

The use of space and facilities by the faculty and staff in delivering a solid educational experience to a broad range of learners

Standard 7 Recommendations

Recommendation

Develop a long-range plan that adequately addresses the significant structural integrity of the building

Recommendation

Prioritize and increase critical plumbing and electrical repairs to provide a safe learning environment for students

Recommendation

Ensure funding for needed repairs of classroom windows and significant ventilation issues

Recommendation

Develop a plan to address deficiencies in building access for students with disabilities

Recommendation

Continue to promote the need for a new building to the local community and all stakeholders

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 this school. The faculty, school board, and superintendent should be apprised by the building administration yearly of progress made addressing visiting committee recommendations.

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

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

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

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

The visiting committee would like to express thanks to the community for the hospitality and welcome. The school community completed an exemplary self-study that clearly identified the school's strengths and areas of need. The time and effort dedicated to the self-study and preparation for the visit ensured a successful accreditation visit.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES Commission on Public Secondary Schools

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

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

Roster of Team Members

Chair(s)

Chair: Maria Silvestri - West Springfield High School

Assistant Chair: Mr. Terrance Ingano - New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.

Team Members

Anne Marie Borsky - Murdock High School

Alicia Boudreau - Northbridge High School

Josh Goldfine - Belmont High School

Jennifer Herzog - Sutton Memorial High School

Lauren King - Cranston High School West

Ms. Nicole LePrevost - Auburn High School

Jasvir MacIntosh - Carver Middle High School

Devyn Quigley - Millbury Memorial Junior-Senior High School

Heather Root - Fitchburg High School

Kelly Schultz - Dedham High School

Shaun Tharaldson - West Springfield High School

Mr. William Thomas - Charlestown High School

Carrie Vasseur - Quabbin Regional High School

Carlos Zalduondo - Snowden International School at Copley